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A
P R E S E R V A T I V E
F R O M

Criminal Offences:

OR, THE
POWER OF GODLINESS

To conquer the reigning VICES of

SENSUALITY AND PROFANENESS,

Considering them, as the chief Causes which induce UN-
THINKING MEN to commit those CRIMES which bring
them to SHAME and PUNISHMENT in THIS WORLD;
and as sure to end in their EVERLASTING MISERY in
the NEXT.

To which is added,

A SHORT OFFICE,

FOR THE

PENITENT, RETURNING SINNER;

Chiefly taken from the Book of COMMON PRAYER.

BY T. HUMPHRIES, A. M.

VICAR of ST. CHAD'S, SHREWSBURY.

THE THIRD EDITION.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the
earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters
cover the sea. ISAIAH xi. 9.

The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men;
teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should
live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for
that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and
our Saviour Jesus Christ. TITUS ii. 11—13.

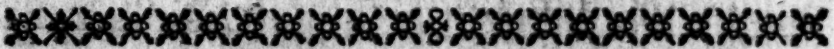
SHREWSBURY:

Printed by J. EDDOWES, and sold by T. LONGMAN, PATER-NOSTER-
ROW, LONDON. MDCCCLXXVI.

[Price 3d. or one Guinea a Hundred.]



 THE reader into whose hands this book may chance to come, is earnestly requested to lend it to his neighbour; or to read it in the ears of such as cannot, or will not read for themselves, though they may stand in great need of being made sensible of the danger they are in.



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A PRESERVATIVE, &c.

C H A P. I.

There are none so bad, but they may amend and be saved.

AT a time when the people of *Israel* were very wicked, God sent the prophet *Isaiah*, to say to them, 'Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' This is a great thing, which God Almighty here promises, but it is no more than he, on his part, will certainly make good. Our merciful God is not only ready to forgive his sinful creatures, but also endeavours, by every means, to make them fit for his forgiveness: and though you be ever so wicked, 'though your sins be as scarlet, though they be red like crimson,' though your past crimes have been of the deepest dye, and your minds be stained, and foul with corrupt lusts, even as with 'scarlet,' or 'crimson;' yet, if you will but come now, and reason the matter fairly with God, and your consciences; if you will but hearken to what God, and your own reason, have to say to you, it must needs give a new turn to your minds, and make them as 'white as snow,' or 'pure as the untarnished wool.'

It is indeed a very hard matter, to work upon the hearts of careless men, so as to change them from sinful to holy. Their vain and loose imaginations are deeply rooted in them; they have not learnt to take pleasure in better things; they do not love to hear of better things; this is their sad misfortune; here lies the great danger of their case; for nothing can save them, unless they will mind what is said to them; and this they do not like to do, because their minds have not been used to think upon God and goodness. As *St. Paul* says, their 'heart

‘ is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and
 ‘ their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with
 ‘ their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand
 ‘ with their hearts, and should be converted,’ and saved.
 However, though men are ever so dull of hearing, there
 are *some things* enough to startle them; which, when properly
 set before their eyes, they must own the truth of, and feel
 their importance. So it was, even under the old testament.
 In those days, if Men would but come and reason together
 with God, in his word, it would be sure to work a change
 in them for the better, making them ‘ white as snow,’ and
 ‘ pure as wool.’ And then how much more awakening is
 the clear light of the gospel! How much more powerful is
 the ‘ blood of Jesus Christ,’ to cleanse you from all sin! to
 purify your souls! and ‘ make you partakers of the divine
 nature!’ That is, to make you like God in holiness, having
 escaped the pollutions of the world, through lust. The gospel
 is a ‘ refiner’s fire,’ and like ‘ fuller’s soap,’ to cleanse and
 purify men from all their evil habits: and when your hearts
 are once touched, so that you begin to take a right thought,
 you will be led on to consider things, more and more, every
 day, till, by the Grace of God, you are brought to a settled
 seriousness, and care about your salvation.

C H A P. II.

How happy men will be, when they do truly repent.

AND now, my dear fellow-creatures, let us please
 ourselves in thinking, what an happiness it will be, when
 this comes to be the case; what a blessed thing it must
 be to see all men thus ‘ cleansed,’ or cured of their sins,
 by the power of true godliness: for, in truth, sin is the
 only cause of men’s worst sufferings in this world, as well
 as of their ruin in the next. If it were not for sin, God’s
 creatures would never be unhappy. So that to cleanse you
 from sin, or to recover you from the
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the slavery of evil habits, is freeing you from your worst troubles now, and the most dreadful suffering for ever.

C H A P. III.

How happy men will be, in their own minds, when cured or cleansed of their Sins.

OUR blessed Lord says, that his religion is the *kingdom of God*,—the *kingdom of heaven* upon earth. And so it would truly be found, if mankind could but be brought to live and act under its influence. Heaven would then be actually begun among us; it would be all happiness here, because we should be all of us preparing ourselves, and one-another, for the happiness of heaven.

First, when the power of godliness governs you, it will ease you of that doubt, and dread of God's displeasure, which will always hang upon your minds, till such time, as you find yourselves holy, in heart and life; and that you are doing what good you can, as faithful servants of God should do. But when your hearts can satisfy you, that this is your case, then you will find yourselves at ease; you will be all calmness and joy within; for, being thus justified by a true faith, your minds will enjoy 'peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:—because, 'being made free from sin, and 'becoming servants to God,' you are sure of 'forgiveness, for the sins that are past,' and having your 'fruit 'unto holiness,' for the time to come, you may rejoice in the hope of everlasting life, in the end.

Besides this, the power of true religion will root out of your minds those uneasy passions of envy, jealousy, malice, and hatred; and by so doing, will prevent all those brawls and quarrels, all that evil-speaking and undermining one another, which we see so much of among men: and then I leave you to judge, how much more happy your lives will be, than they are at present. I need not tell you, how uneasy you have been made by envy and hatred, whilst you have harboured them in

your breasts; how they have gnawed and fed upon your livers, like devouring vultures! and you have also seen, into what storms of furious passion, they break out; what bitter words they produce, and sometimes what dismal deeds they hurry men to commit. You must therefore needs be sensible, what a happy world this would be, to what it now is, if men did but live under the power of godliness, if their minds were but made humble, calm, and gentle, by the reforming influence of gospel truths, and, through the assistance of divine grace, were brought to be of that meek and kind temper, which was in the *blessed Jesus*. Then heaven indeed will be begun upon earth. Then peace and good will would abound, and kind services be the delightful employment of men towards each other; happy in themselves, happy in one another, and rejoicing in the Lord: And though little mistakes may happen, (as mistakes and differences will happen among short sighted men;) you will have learnt to make a good use even of them; true religion teaches you to think the best of others, and to make all proper allowances for men's failings; and as for any uneasiness, which such things may occasion, you will be made abundant amends, in the pleasure it will be to your hearts to 'forgive others, as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.'

C H A P. IV.

How happy it will be for men's bodies, when they are cured of their sins.

AND then, as to your bodily part; curing you of sin would be curing you of most, if not all the evils, which you labour under. How many are the bodily sufferings, which men bring upon themselves, by a loose and sensual life! 'Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go

'go to seek mixed wine.'—See many a poor creature, who hath not lived out half his days, dragging about a wasted carcase, coughing up his entrails, and tottering over the brink of his grave! and though! (sad reflection for him!) though he knows, that it is all owing to his own intemperance and wickedness; yet he will not put on the resolution to leave it off! He drinks deeper and deeper in the poisoned cup; he continues to drink on, though every draught he tastes hastens on his death, and at the same time, sinks him deeper into the abyss of everlasting woe.—How many are the dreadful accidents, which are owing to men's drinking! Some lose their lives in an instant, and are hurried drunk out of the world, to appear in that shameful condition before the judge of all the earth! Others lose their limbs, and thus doom themselves to drag on a wretched life; deprived of the comforts, which God had given them to enjoy, deprived of the ability of keeping themselves, and families, from want, and nakedness.—See, what distempers men are almost sure to bring upon themselves, by following lewd women! An awful judgment of God, in this world, which he hath wonderfully annexed to the indulgence of unlawful desires! The impurity of the whoremonger's mind breaks out upon his body in putrifying sores, and loathsome rottenness; and his constitution, though repaired, is often weakened by the very cure, so as never to recover its former strength. Such are the present wages which men meet with in the service of sin; instead of health of body, and peace of mind, instead of prosperity, honour and long life, which God hath wisely annexed to holiness and righteousness.

C H A P. V.

There would be no need of prisons, and executioners, if the power of religion did but prevail, in making men chaste, sober, and honest.

BUT that happiness of prevailing *godliness*, which I intend chiefly to speak of, is, that unthinking men will be kept by it from falling into those crimes, which bring them to shame, and publick punishment in this world.

When the power of godliness prevails as it ought, we shall be in no dread of thieves or murderers. ‘They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,’ saith the Lord. The traveller will pass unmolested in his journey, and safely bring home his honest gains to his chearful and welcoming family. Our houses will be free from fear, and our cattle feed securely in their pastures without a keeper. Honest men will no longer have occasion to form themselves into societies, for their safety against the wicked, as they have found it necessary to do of late, which is a sad proof, that the present times are worse than the former. The whole country will not be alarmed, every now and then, with *hue and cry*, for the purpose of hunting down the miserably sculking offenders, like pernicious wild beasts which cannot be suffered to go at large, and are fit for nothing, but to be taken and destroyed. And we shall then be delivered from the dreadful necessity of dragging to prisons, and to death, many a one of our unhappy fellow creatures, to the great grief of every tender-hearted person, who sees or hears of the tragical scene; instead of having the pleasing satisfaction to see them walking honestly in the fear of God: instead of seeing them happy in themselves, a credit and a blessing to their families, and useful and valuable members of society.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

There will be no end of criminal punishments, till men are cured of their sensuality and profaneness.

OH, what a pity it is that men should sell themselves for nought ! That they should thus exchange honour for disgrace, and happiness for misery ! And what a pity it is, that every method is not more vigorously tried, to put an end to such offences as these in a christian country ! I could mention many ways, by which every one may and ought to promote this wished-for event ; but the sum of all is, ' to teach men to deny ' ungodliness and worldly lusts.' This is the only remedy ; at least all others will fail without it. By endeavouring to save men's souls, we shall take the surest way to preserve them from falling into worldly shame and punishment. For, whilst there are so many, who live without the fear of God, and are so deplorably subject to fleshly and corrupt lusts, so long we must expect to hear of criminal offences often happening. Here lies the root of all the miseries, which poor unthinking men run themselves into. From hence come murders, and robberies among us, and there will be no end of them, till men can be cured of the love of drink, of whoredom, of lewd and profane discourse. But if once men could be made sober, chaste and serious in their behaviour ; there would be little need to caution them against criminal offences. Bad as men are in other respects, I believe they would seldom be guilty of murder or theft, if they were not, in a manner forced to it, by their former dissolute courses. As to murder, nature itself shudders at the thought ; and theft is a mean, shameful vice, which I think few men would willingly commit, till they have brought themselves under a sort of necessity of doing it. No ! men must be some time in preparing themselves for murder or theft. But when you begin to give way to sensual lusts, there is no knowing to what lengths you may go. When you first begin to find plea-

sure in drinking, or lewdness, it may be an affront to warn you against criminal offences: so was *Hazael* very angry with the prophet *Elisba*, for telling him what cruel actions he would be afterwards guilty of. 'Am I a dog,' says *Hazael*, 'that I should do such a thing?' He had no notion, that he could ever come to be so wicked. But alas! it proved true as *Elisba* had told him. And so there may be many a man, who once hath said to himself, 'God forbid that I should ever become a thief or a murderer,' yet, by yielding to his lusts, he may go by degrees from one thing to another, till he finds himself fast in a prison, almost before he is aware. The habit of drinking, the sort of company which you meet with in ale-houses; the conversation which you join in, over your liquor; all these have a fatal tendency to poison your minds, and to fill you with low and filthy notions; whilst your lusts and passions are, at the same time, set on fire by the pernicious * liquor, which you are stupidly swallowing down. Then it is, that unbridled lust prevails, to bring forth sin and death; then it is, that furious rage kindles, like gunpowder, at the touch, and an unlucky blow suddenly brings on the most distressful and fatal consequences; then it is, that envy and revenge are let loose, to accomplish their deadly deeds; then a man grows regardless of fear, for the sake of supplying his extravagance; and the fatal resolution is rashly taken, which many a one hath lamented in bitterness of soul, for his whole life-time afterwards. And alas, when one considers, how many such drinking companies there are to be met with in ale-houses, every day; what

* I call it *pernicious*, not only because drinking too much of it is hurtful; but because most of the ale that is to be met with in common ale-houses, is mixt with something to make it strong. Witness the many instances of tobacco being discovered in the brewing tubs. The manifest design of these tricks is to make poor men more mad or stupid than the strength of the malt made use of will do; and surely if men have any prudence, this will be a caution to them, how they open their mouth to swallow down every poison that falls in their way. — And then, as to spirituous liquors, they are for no other purpose than to destroy; instead of nourishing the body,

what swearing and damning and cursing; what furious passions and profligate behaviour men give into, when they get together in these places; it is rather to be wondered at, that mischief does not happen from them oftener than it does. It is true, the mischief may not immediately happen; but you are certainly making way for it, and it will be very apt to follow one time or other. And though there are many poor, drinking, profligate men, that never are guilty of theft, yet certain it is, that if there were no drunkards or whoremongers, there would be few or no robberies or murder at all. * When the fleshly lust gets the better of your reason, and quenches the seeds of grace in you, then you are entirely governed by your beastly appetites, which lead you, as it were blindfold, you know not whither. Sensual indulgence,

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* Historians boast, that in the reign of king *Alfred* the Great, about nine hundred years ago, 'a beautiful young damsel might have carried a purse full of gold openly in her hand throughout the kingdom, without fear of being robbed of the money, or being injured herself.' This is said to be owing to the excellent regulations which were made in that reign. It was *Alfred* who first divided the kingdom into counties and hundreds, for the better administration of justice; and he also made another excellent regulation, of which nothing now remains except the name: He instituted *tythings*, that is, every ten neighbouring house-keepers, with their families, were knit together as in one body, under certain rules; all being bound for the peaceable behaviour of each other. By these means no idle vagabond could find a shelter, because no one could continue within such small districts, without being known and observed; as each person in it was in a manner answerable for such as were permitted to take up their residence among them; and on this, and many other accounts, the number of criminal offences must needs be lessened.

This was certainly a most wise and excellent institution; and I can see no reason why it may not now be practised, under such regulations as the present spirit of our laws would admit of. — In a merely political view, it would, no doubt, have some good effect, but without the aid of religion, to cure men of sensual lusts, it must fall vastly short of the desired success; and indeed the promoting of practical religion may be one object of such a regulation, by which it will be able to compass its end. This is the *salt* which must *season* every plan, for preserving the world from corruption. For so long as that one custom of drinking prevails, as it does, neither this nor any other expedient will ever prevent criminal offences. If most of the masters of families, and perhaps the *head tythingman* himself, will be guzzling down drink, so much as most of them do upon all occasions, their domestics and inferiors will not fail to imitate their example, and the consequences will be sure to follow.

gence, like a tyrannical harlot, forces you upon desperate actions to supply her demands; you have not resolution, or patience to dig, and to beg you are ashamed; good thoughts die away in you by degrees, and you are brought, you can hardly tell how, into the commission of crimes, which once you scorned the very thought of.

Thus many a man is led on to the ruin of himself, and his family; to the loss of all credit, and peace here, and perhaps his happiness for ever; whilst like the silly bird, he hasteth to the snare, little thinking that it is for his life. The beginning of vice is sweet, at first, to his corrupt, unguarded taste; but as sure as he drinks on, so sure he will come to draw out the dregs of the cup at last, and perhaps before he is aware, he may find, even in this world, that they are the dregs of a cup of trembling. And I will repeat it again, that so long as the love of drink, whoredom, misusing the Lord's day, and lewd talking prevail among men, so long as the vanity of men's minds leads them to run after diversions, such as cockings, shews, stage plays, gaming, and dissipation of any sort, so long we shall hear of criminal offences, daily happening, in one part of the country or other; so long our prisons will be filling again, as duly as they are emptied, and a sad kalendar of unhappy criminals will come out at every assize: and the reason, why there hath been a greater number of late years, than perhaps ever were before, is because luxury and vain extravagance, because running after shews, and pastimes of all kinds, and of course intemperance and sensuality, both among the rich and poor, have been of late growing to a greater height †.

C H A P.

† I know that mere covetousness makes some commit criminal offences; as *St. Paul* says, 'The love of money is the root of all evil; which some having coveted after, have erred from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.' And it might be well worth while to apply the 'power of godliness,' to this disease of the mind also, which God knows, too many christians are subject to; and of the sad effects of which

C H A P. VII.

The power of godliness to conquer the reigning vices of sensuality and profaneness.

I Have shewn in the former chapter, that men will never be hindered from falling into criminal offences, unless they are cured of their sensual, and corrupt dispositions. But oh, what a difficult work is this to do! alas! where shall we begin? or by what means is it to be set about? how shall men's hearts be come at, so that their sensual inclinations may be rooted out, and their minds turned to the pursuit of holiness, and heavenly things? how shall this be done for men, who at present have an aversion to it themselves?—what shall be able to cure the drunkard of his fondness for idle company, and liquor, and put him upon seeking earnestly after that ‘meat which endureth to eternal life?’—what shall be able to purify the heart of the fearless whoremonger? or put a stop to that shameful custom of filthy talking?—or change the blaspheming rage of the prophane swearer into meek civility and the fear of an oath? we may say with *St. Paul*, ‘who, or what is sufficient for these things?’ who shall deliver poor unthinking men from such deadly habits? and when one considers, how deeply these vices appear to be rivited in them, how readily they yield to them, and how unwilling they are to be told of them, one may almost be tempted to despair of doing any good with them, and be ready to say, as we often hear it said, *so it always was, and so it always will be.* But God forbid! surely there is no need to use this hopeless, this faithless proverb, in a christian nation. For why? though men are very hard to be wrought upon, for their good; yet have they no sense? have

which we see too many sad instances. But sensuality and profaneness daily ruin their ‘ten thousands;’ and, my brethren! let the *power of godliness* once prevail, to banish these ruinous vices from among you, and the *same power* will not fail to make you honest and blameless, in all manner of conversation.

have they no understanding left? do they know no difference between glory and shame, between ease and pain, between happiness and misery, between heaven and hell? have unthinking men no notion of fear, or hope, or gratitude, or love? is there no spark of true wisdom left in such men's souls, which may be stirred up in them, into a bright and holy flame? are our unthinking brethren so far gone in wickedness, that they are turned into very brutes indeed? so that they never can be brought off, from their vile lusts, and from the vanity of their minds. No, this is not the true way of considering the case.—Why should we give men over for lost, when God never gives them over? 'though their sins be as scarlet or crimson, they may become as white as snow,' they may get the better of all their bad habits, and become holy and happy creatures, if they will but hearken to what God; and their own reason have to say to them, 'Come now, let us reason together saith the Lord,' &c.—Yes, my dear, precious souls! you may every one of you become holy and happy, if you please. It is desparaging the grace and goodness of God, to say, *that some men have always given way to sensual lusts, and always will*: they who say so, seem not to be sensible of the damning nature of such sins; they do not consider the value of men's souls, or else they could never speak with such stupid indifference on so melancholy a subject. It shews a strange lightness of mind, for any one to say, with an air of unconcern, *that mankind cannot be cured of their fleshly lusts*; for what is this, but saying that some men cannot be saved from damnation? and oh! who can bear to think, without the deepest anguish, of any one's 'dwelling with everlasting burnings.' But why should we despair of making all mankind better? God hath never given them over—our merciful Creator, who made us all for the blessed enjoyment of his own presence, hath been continually using every wise means to make men holy, and happy, at all times ever since the world began, down to this day. And can we imagine that all this gracious
 pains

pains hath been thrown away? hath God been striving in vain with man for so many thousand years? certainly not—multitudes of happy souls in all ages, have, no doubt, answered their Creator's care, and been preserved pure and blameless from the corruptions of the world. But God Almighty hath been always endeavouring to *increase* that happy number, and to *lessen* the number of those, who are daily going in the broad way of destruction. It is his will * that none perish, but * that ALL should come to repentance.*—This plainly shews that we ought never to despair of making men better; and certain it is, that the more pains God's servants take in winning souls, the more there *will be saved*, in every age, and every nation: so that *all* of you may be recovered, to your unspeakable comfort, if you can but be made to attend to those plain reasons, and motives, by which a wise and good God is ever persuading you—What these *reasons* and *motives* are, I shall now lay before you; and the influence, which they may be expected to have upon your hearts and lives, is what I mean by the POWER of GODLINESS.

C H A P. VIII.

God Almighty hath so framed the minds of men, that sin is uneasy to them, because it is unnatural.

I AM now to set before you, what God Almighty hath done, to make you holy, and what great reason you have to be so.—And *first*,

Do but look within yourselves, and you will find there the clearest reason, why you should take care to keep yourselves pure. You will find, that your very constitution and nature require it; that God hath so made and framed you, that unless you be holy and virtuous, you cannot possibly be happy in yourselves. God hath placed in your breasts reason and conscience: these tell you what is right and wrong; they applaud and

and encourage you, when you act aright; but they upbraid, they accuse, they condemn you when you do amiss; and whilst you *continue* to do amiss, they will never let you rest in peace. Every act of wickedness throws your whole inward frame into disorder; it makes you at odds with yourselves, and nothing can set you to rights again, till you are returned into the way of holiness and goodness, and have continued therein, for some long time. I would ask any one of you, whether you do not find this to be the case? and then, it is the clearest reason, that can be, to convince you of the necessity of holiness; for you see, that your very nature requires it of you; you feel the obligation of it *within yourselves*; you feel, that God hath so made you, that you must be holy, or else you are wretched; so that you have a continual call to holiness and goodness, in your own minds, if you would but attend to it.

C H A P. IX.

Every man's own mind also tells him, that God hates sin, and will punish it.

YOU have just now seen, that God made and framed you, for virtue and holiness; and why did he so? because they are agreeable to him, and this too is what your own minds tell you. That reason, and conscience, which God hath placed in your breasts, teach you, that 'he loveth righteousness,' and will reward it, but that 'he hateth all wickedness,' and will punish it. The Psalmist rightly says, 'he that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?' and in-like manner, he that hath placed in man a conscience of good and evil, shall not he reward the one, and punish the other? Here I again appeal to every man's own self. Whenever you think seriously on God, does he not appear to your minds, as an holy, pure, kind, and good Being? Do not your own minds tell you, that fleshly lusts are contrary to his

his pure nature; that giving way to sinful lusts makes you unlike God; that it sets you at odds with him, and that you can never expect his approbation and favour, so long as you are apt to fall into drinking, or whoredom, or to indulge any of your fleshly appetites? I am sure, your own minds do tell you so, whenever you think at-all of the matter. This truth is deeply engraven upon the heart of every man. It is written within you by *the finger of God*; and though you may be so careless as not to regard it, yet you cannot blot it out. The apprehension that God hateth wickedness, is a *natural* one; it is a part of a man's self, and no man can alter himself; you cannot undo the work of God, who made you; a secret dread of his displeasure *will* hang upon the mind of him that is impure, and filthy in his doings; and there is no such thing as getting rid of this dread, so long as you continue to be so. A man may keep this inward dread to himself perhaps; he may appear chearful and gay in his outward carriage; he may wantonly boast of his frolicks, and glory in his shame, when he gets among his loose companions, too many of whom there are to keep him in countenance, and to harden him and themselves in wickedness; but for all that, the man is never rightly at ease, all the while. 'In such laughter, the heart is often sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.' Such a man may make a shift to appear undisturbed among men, and nobody may know, what the real state of his mind is; but he is like a wounded bird, whose hurt none can see; he carries his grief along with him, wherever he goes; the poisoned arrow of guilt sticks fast in him, it preys upon his vitals, it eats up his spirit; whereas the man that lives under the true fear of God, and walks holily, and dutifully before him, feels his heart at perfect ease: this is not that false calm, which is owing to a want of thought; but it is a well grounded comfort, which he hath, in looking carefully into himself; because he can do it with pleasure, in an humble, but joyful sense of God's approbation, and favour.

favour.—My brethren, this inward sense of God's favour or displeasure is a REAL THING. Nothing in the world is more certain; all men are agreed in it. Every man shews it, at certain times, whether he will or no. Charge any one with a fault, and it puts his whole frame into motion; his blood comes in his face, or else, perhaps he turns pale, in an instant; his eye wanders, and he cannot bear to look you in the face; his voice falters, and perhaps his joints tremble; this shews that there is a conscience in every man, and that though it be asleep in some, yet, whenever it is stirred up, and awakened, the power of it is great, and cannot be hidden; the more you give yourselves leave to consider, the more fully you will every day, be convinced, that this is the case; and you will look upon it, as a most clear and forcible reason, why you ought to overcome the sinful lusts of the flesh, to find, that God is, as it were, in your heart, to deter you from them; and to persuade you to be holy, that you may please him, and be happy.

C H A P. X.

God invites men to consider, by his daily mercies.

BUT because men's evil habits make them thoughtless of their best interests, and they are not apt to walk by the light of that reason and conscience, that 'candle of the Lord' which he hath placed in their minds; (I say, because this first instance of God's goodness, in making you, is often of little use in directing your conduct) therefore he tries another method with you. When reason and conscience *within* fail of keeping you pure, God calls upon you, *from without*, by his providences. He hath so disposed the frame of the whole world, that under his wise all-seeing eye, things are continually happening, which may awaken your reason within you, and put you upon thinking on him, when you are in danger of forgetting him.

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The mercies which you daily receive; — the rising of the sun so duly every morning; and the renewing of the moon in her regular seasons, to give light by night, are wonderfully calculated to bring, every day, to your thoughts, the never-ceasing power and goodness of our God, who made and who directs, with such great exactness, these amazing bodies, which are seen by the face of the whole earth, and which are so beautiful, so useful, and so necessary for our present comfortable habitation. — The blessing of rain and fruitful seasons, by which our kind Creator is continually providing for the earth; whilst it fills you with food and gladness, is also intended to inspire your hearts with gratitude, and to keep up in you a sense of dutiful obedience to him, whose bountiful hand dispenses these good things to you, for your bodily use. — I might here mention ten thousand instances of God's continual watchfulness over you, and his wise care in providing for your health, convenience, and comfort. And if you had but a true thought of what you eat, and drink, and hear, and smell, and see, every day of your lives, you would learn to consider them all, as so many occasions to make you think upon God, and of course, to make you mindful of pleasing him in holiness.

C H A P. XI.

God endeavours to awaken men to consider, by sending his judgments in the earth.

BUT since you are apt to overlook God's daily mercies, because they are common, and so that which ought to make you more thankful, makes you more heedless of his care for you; therefore in pity to your folly, God hath appointed that his judgments, his afflicting providences, should visit you, that his rod might teach you to remember him, when his mercies cannot. — The thunder is provided to roar over your heads, to awe your giddy minds into reverence for that
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‘glorious God, who maketh the thunder,’ and to settle it in your minds, that ‘with him is terrible majesty.’— And the thunderbolt, by God’s appointment, as the ‘lightning down of his arm,’ sometimes proves fatal to your houses, your cattle, and your lives, to enforce upon you the remembrance, that your *all* is in his hand, and that you have no where to flee to for shelter, when he directs his destroying angel to execute his wise counsels. — Earthquakes, hurricanes, overflowing showers, sickly seasons, scarcity of bread, fires, all the disasters which belong to your present state, are wisely intended to keep the world awake, lest men should go on forgetful of God their Maker, abusing his mercies, and plunging themselves into misery and ruin. Even death itself was mercifully ordained to be, at once, the cure and the penalty of sin; that you might have it, as a continual warning before your eyes, not to make a wrong use of this present world, but that you may take care to be always ready for your great and everlasting change; because every day shews, that none of you know how soon it may happen.

Thus you see, that all God’s working, his making you at first, the manner in which he framed all things in the world, and in which he directs them ever since, is all mercifully and wisely contrived for your good, to promote your present welfare and everlasting happiness. If you have not been used to think of this, it will not appear to you so plain at first; but the more you do think of it, the more you will be convinced of it every day, and you will come, in time, to see and adore the hand of God in every thing that your eyes behold, or that happens in the world. You will come to consider this world, as a place into which God hath sent you, to be fitted for heaven; and that all things in it are so disposed, as to work together for your everlasting good, if you will but make that use of them which God intends you should. ‘O that you were wise,’ and then you would find continual occasions for blessing and praising God, with awful trust and reverential love, for
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what you are and what you have ; and in this way, whilst you enjoy the only real happiness of this world, you will be preparing and ripening for the glories of the next.

C H A P. XII.

God hath been calling upon men, by his holy prophets, ever since the world began.

BUT, because you are very apt to overlook all these things ; because reason and conscience are often disregarded, and even stupified in you, by bad habits and by evil examples : since neither the numberless mercies, by which God invites you, nor his judgments, by which he would awaken you, prove always successful : since the still voice of God, speaking to you inwardly in your consciences, and outwardly by his works, are not sufficiently attended to ; therefore he hath expressly and plainly spoken to you, by the mouth of holy men, his servants, the prophets.

If you read the books of *Genesis* and *Exodus*, you will there see, how God was always watching over mankind, to keep them holy and good ; and at a time when the wickedness of men was grown to a great height, you are told how he brought a flood of waters, which covered the face of the whole earth, and drowned them all, except *Noah* and his family, who were a righteous generation, whom he taught to build an ark, or ship, in which they were preserved till the waters were abated. You read also, how God Almighty spake to the children of *Israel* from mount *Sinai*, from amidst thunders and lightnings, and out of the midst of the fire, which appeared to consume the mountain, though it burnt nothing ; and that at that time, *Moses* had the ten commandments given him, written upon two tables of stone, with the finger of God. You may there read also, the many other wonders which God did by *Moses*, to keep up the knowledge of himself among mankind ;

‘ that

‘ that they might keep his commandments for their good
‘ always.’ And in short, you may read in the bible,
how at all times, ever since the world began, God Al-
mighty hath been using such methods, as, in his wis-
dom and goodness, he saw most proper to keep men
holy.

But alas, all this was not enough for perverse men ;
for though many were the better for it, and we are as-
sured that there will be a very great multitude of happy
souls, which no man can number, out of all nations,
kindreds and people, from the beginning of the world to
the end of it, who shall come to praise God in heaven,
for giving them warning ; yet there were still too many,
who were not made better by all the pains that God had
bestowed upon them. And it might melt the hardest
heart, to hear how tenderly their merciful Creator la-
ments over the blindness and stupidity of such unthink-
ing creatures. ‘ Oh ! that they were wise, that they
‘ understood this, that they would consider their latter
‘ end.’—‘ Oh ! that there were such an heart in them,
‘ that they would fear me, and keep all my command-
‘ ments always, that it might be well with them, and
‘ with their children for ever.’—‘ Hear O heavens, and
‘ give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have
‘ nourished and brought up children, and they have re-
‘ belled against me.—Ah, sinful nation ! why should ye
‘ be stricken any more ?—But come now, let us reason
‘ together saith the Lord ; though your sins be as scarlet,
‘ they shall be white as snow, though they be red like
‘ crimson, they shall be as wool. For why will ye
‘ die, O ye house of *Israel* ?’

Thus does the almighty father of mercies mourn over
such of his poor unthinking creatures, who would by no
means be hindered from running upon their own ruin.
And though these things were done in the days of old ;
yet the scripture tells us, that they were intended for
examples to us, and as such, that God took care to have
them written for our instruction.

C H A P. XIII.

God now calls upon us, in the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ.

BUT does God even then give such men over? What saith the scripture, 'how shall I give thee up Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee Israel?—Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?' Yes, a woman may forget her sucking child, yet will not the Lord forget to warn and to strive with his disobedient creatures, whose souls are ever precious in his sight, so long as there is any hope of bringing them to be holy, that they may be happy. No, my brethren! God is very loth to give over the wicked for lost. He told them of old time, that though men's destruction was of their own seeking, yet still he had in store for them further help.—That there was one method more to be tried with men, when all others had, in great measure, failed. This promise is now fulfilled to us as christians. **GOD, WHO AT SUNDRY TIMES, AND IN DIFFERENT MANNERS SPAKE, IN TIME PAST, TO MANKIND, BY THE PROPHETS, HATH, IN THESE LAST DAYS, SPOKEN TO US BY HIS SON.**—'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son;' he 'delivered him up for us all,' to save us from misery and ruin, 'that whosoever believeth in him,' whosoever will be a true follower of Jesus Christ, might not go on to 'perish' in his sins, 'but' be brought to live holily and happily, in this present world, and 'have,' in the world to come, 'eternal life.'

Oh! my brethren! Oh! that I could but bring you to be acquainted with this 'glorious gospel of the Son of God.' For if you will but lend an attentive ear to what the 'Lord of life' came from heaven to teach you, he will give you an 'understanding heart' to know the truth, and you will find it to be 'the power

power of God unto salvation. So *St. Paul* calls it; so he found it by experience, both as to himself and many others, to whom he took such earnest pains in teaching it. It was able to reform those who were 'dead, as it were, 'in trespasses and sins;' and so the greatest sinner would find it, if he could be made to take heed. If once a glimpse of the eternal world did but dart into your minds, through the knowledge of Christ; and were you put upon enquiring, in good earnest, 'what you must do to be saved;' you would then be let into such a clear sight of things, and have such wonderful and engaging truths laid open to your view, as must needs make your hearts melt within you, and bring you to a renewed, holy state. Here you will see the love of God in Christ Jesus, so strongly, so tenderly inviting you, by the greatest of kindresses done to your souls, that you cannot help giving up your whole hearts to him, to do his will, to obtain his favour, and to promote his glory. Oh! that I could but make you once begin to perceive the 'excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord!' you would think it the greatest blessing that ever befel you. Like the new christians, of whom we read in the acts of the apostles, you would be daily praising God for it; you would then know what it is, like them, to 'eat your meat with gladness and singleness of heart;' and you would wish to make your companions as happy as yourselves; you would be publishing these 'glad tidings' to others; instead of talking about every vain, and trifling, and wicked subject, as you now do, you would be endeavouring to administer grace to the hearers. You would be telling your friends what God hath done for your souls; because you would know how to pity the condition of those, whose hearts you perceive to be strangers to the comforts which you enjoy.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIV.

To become acquainted with the gospel, you must read the holy scriptures.

AND now, my readers, I come to set forth to you, *what this glorious gospel of the Son of God is,*—but indeed, I am not able to speak of it as it deserves. The word of God alone, can sufficiently describe to you the excellency of his gospel. If you would fully know, what the *Son of God* hath done for your souls, you must carefully study, and piously meditate on the holy scriptures, especially the New Testament. There you will find all the treasures of true wisdom and knowledge. There your souls may feast, as with marrow and fatness, whilst you read of all that the blessed Jesus did and taught; of which I shall now endeavour to give you some short account, that it may entice you to read it, more fully, in the holy scriptures, yourselves, and draw the living *water of life*, out of those wells of salvation.

C H A P. XV.

The miraculous works, which our Lord Jesus Christ wrought, the remarkable testimonies, which he received from heaven, the wonders, which happened at his death, his glorious resurrection, and his ascension into heaven, are abundant proofs that God had sent him.

THE first thing, which I must take notice of to you, is, that the blessed Jesus wrought miracles, when he came among us. He did a great number of mighty works, which were beyond all the power of man to do. He made the blind to see, and the deaf to hear in an instant, by a word's speaking. He cured some, that were sick of fevers, and just at the point of death, without so much as seeing them, and even when he was yet a great way off from them. Some were cured

red of old diseases, by touching the hem of his garment. He cured persons, who were possessed with devils, raging mad, and they became immediately calm, and in their right mind. He fed five thousand people, till they were satisfied, with five loaves and two small fishes; and when they had done eating, there was as much, or more left, than there was at first. In like manner, he also fed four thousand, at another time. He stilled the raging waves of the sea, and it became calm. He also raised many to life again, after they had been dead some days, and even buried. These, and many other works of this kind, our Lord was doing, every day, openly, in the sight of all the people, who were fully convinced, that they were done by the mighty power of God. And to crown the whole, he arose from the dead himself. He had told his enemies, as well as his disciples, that he would do so; and accordingly, after they had crucified him, after they had seen him expire in agonies upon the cross; after one of the soldiers had pierced his side with a spear, so that blood and the water, which is about the heart, came out of the wound; after he had hung upon the cross for some time longer, and was then taken down, dead, and, in the sight of all men, buried in a new tomb, which was hewn in a rock; and though the entrance of the tomb was sealed up, by his enemies, and a guard of soldiers was set to watch it; yet on the third day after his death, that is, on the Sunday morning, (he being crucified on the Friday) there was a great earthquake,—an angel came and rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre,—and ‘the Lord Jesus rose triumphantly’ from the grave to life again, and shewed himself openly, by many infallible proofs, eating and drinking, and conversing with his disciples, for forty days together; during which time, he gave them many instructions for preaching the gospel; and then, when they were all met together, he blessed them, and as they were looking stedfastly on him, he was taken up into heaven, before their eyes, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

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I might have mentioned before, that, when our blessed Lord bowed his sacred head upon the cross, and gave up the ghost, the beholders were convinced of his high dignity, by what happened at the time.—There came a sudden darkness over the whole land, for three hours together, from twelve o'clock at mid-day, till three in the afternoon,—the earth did quake,—the rocks were rent,—many holy persons arose out of their graves, and were seen by many in the city; and the veil of the temple, that is, a large curtain which was between the body of the temple and the Holy of Holies, was torn asunder from the top to the bottom.

There was also a *centurion*, that is, a captain, with a band of soldiers keeping guard at our Lord's crucifixion; and when the man saw the earthquake, and the unaccountable darkness which happened, he could not help considering them, as the doings of heaven, in honour of our suffering Redeemer; and when he heard the blessed Jesus praying to his heavenly Father for his murderers, saying, 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do;' and crying with a loud voice, 'Father into thy hands I commend my spirit,' when he yielded up the ghost; it had such an effect upon the centurion, that though he had never regarded Christ before, and perhaps had joined with the Jews in deriding him, yet now, he could not help crying out, 'truly this was the Son of God.'—And every man, who considers all these things put together, must be satisfied in his own mind, that the whole was of God. Every man knows, that nothing but the power of God could do these miracles which Christ did; and must be convinced, that God was with him: the plainest man living is as good a judge in this matter as the wisest; a man that is no scholar, can see and hear such things as these, and can judge of them as well as the most learned.—In short, God is now convincing your eyes, and your ears, that he hath sent his Son among you.—You may say to yourselves, as the poor blind man did, to whom our Saviour restored his sight; 'since the world began, it was never heard, that

‘ any one opened the eyes of one that was born blind.’ And, ‘ that if our Saviour were not of God, he could ‘ have done no such things.’ The plainest man can tell this, and the Jewish doctor, *Nicodemus*, could do no more. ‘ Master, (said he to Christ) ‘ we know that thou art a ‘ teacher, come from God, for none can do the works ‘ which thou doest, except God be with him.’ Not only the divine sweetness of his temper, the heavenly wisdom which flowed from his tongue, and the mighty works, which we have been just now speaking of, bear witness to him; but also, when he was baptized by *John*, there came a voice from heaven, which said, ‘ this ‘ is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’

Afterwards, when *Peter*, *James* and *John*, were with Christ in the holy mount, ‘ a bright cloud overshadowed ‘ them, and behold, a voice came out of the cloud, ‘ which said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am ‘ well pleased.’ And once, as he was preaching in the midst of *Jerusalem*, and prayed, saying, ‘ Father, glorify thy name,’ there came a voice from heaven, saying, ‘ I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ So that now it is equally plain, to the learned and unlearned, that it was God who enabled our blessed Lord to do what he did; that therefore he came upon God’s errand, and hath brought us a message from God, inviting us to salvation.

C H A P. XVI.

Who the Lord Jesus Christ is.

BUT it will also help to make you mind this message of God the more, if you will consider what a great and glorious person the Lord Jesus Christ is, who came to bring it unto us.

Our Lord declared, ‘ that God was his Father,’ and that he was the only begotten Son of God,—that ‘ he ‘ had glory with the Father before the world was made,’ —and when he came upon earth, ‘ that he proceeded and

and came forth from God,' and 'that God had sent him.'

St. *Paul* says, that Christ is the image of the invisible God, 'the first born of every creature; for by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth,—all things were created by him, and for him,—and he is before all things, and by him all things consist,—and he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence; for it pleased the Father, that in him should all perfection dwell.'

You read also in the epistle to the Hebrews, that God hath now spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Lord of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they,—even that of the 'Son of God, whom all the angels of God are commanded to worship,' and to whom the Father saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' He was also called by the prophet, 'IMMANUEL,' that is, 'God with us.'

C H A P. XVII.

How we ought to pay attention to the Lord Jesus.

THUS I have shewn you, who the Lord Jesus Christ is. Pray think seriously on it, and settle it in your minds, that you may always remember what a great and glorious person he is; and then it must needs induce you to obey his gospel. Even if you had no care about your own happiness, yet surely the authority and dignity of this adoxable messenger, whom God hath

sent, must command your profound attention, and silence every evil inclination in your souls, that ye may hearken to the awful message which he brings you from heaven. You may be sure, he would not have come, but upon business of the greatest consequence and necessity. And indeed so it was.—He came to recover thoughtless and corrupt men, from their sinful, undone condition: this was a great and merciful undertaking!—It was to save poor unthinking, perishing souls, from eternal damnation! It was also a difficult undertaking; every other method of making men holy had, in great measure, failed of the desired success; and therefore, it was a work for the Son of God himself to be employed in; it was worthy of God to interpose, in so pitiful a case; and to interpose, as he did, in so powerful and so extraordinary a manner.—It was worthy of the blessed and almighty Father of heaven, to send his glorious Son from heaven, and it was worthy the Son of God, to condescend to the compassionate office;—the undertaking was weighty indeed, and a greater person could not have been employed to execute it.—Do but think of this, christians, and lay your situation seriously to heart. Consider upon what holy ground you stand! and take heed that ye refuse not him, that speaketh to you from heaven.—Consider, how you deserve to suffer the severest punishments of hell, if you are not reformed, by what God hath done for you by his Son, Jesus Christ.—If many have deservedly perished, for want of holiness, who had nothing but only their own reason and conscience, to warn and instruct them;—if many have deservedly perished, who, besides reason and conscience, have also had holy prophets to warn them; what must become of unholy christians? How much sorer punishment do you deserve, and will certainly undergo, if, besides all the advantages which other men ever had, you have also so great a Saviour as Christ come to you, and yet you refuse to hear him. If you tread under foot the Son of God, by despising his calls, and will not be prevailed on to embrace

brace those kind offers of grace and mercy, which he hath sealed with his precious blood.

My dear unthinking brethren ! let me prevail upon you to consider, where about you are. Stand still for a while ;—let us reason together on this great occasion.—Consider, who it is with whom you have to do. Consider, who it is that stands in the way ; that is come from heaven, to stop you in your present course, to lead you out of the road which will end in despair and ruin, and to bring you into the path of life. If Christ does not cure you of sin, who can ? If you will not hearken to him, whom will you hearken to ? God could not send you a greater saviour.—All the angels of God worship him, for his exalted dignity and excellence ; and surely, it must be the greatest folly and madness for you not to regard him, who laid aside his glory and dwelt on earth, in the likeness of a man, purely to serve you in your greatest concerns ! Who underwent the bitterest hardships and sufferings, in endeavouring to save you from the damnation of hell, and to bring you to be partakers of his happiness, in glory everlasting !

C H A P. XVIII.

Our Lord Jesus Christ hath confirmed and enforced every motive to holiness, which men ever had before, and also made the fullest discovery of future rewards and punishments.

IT was to bring careless men to their right mind, that this *divine Saviour* came from heaven to earth. His great labour was to put men upon acting, as their own sense and reason ought to have taught them to do, without his coming, and without his undergoing what he did, to teach them.—‘ Why do you not (says he) even of yourselves, judge, or think, that which is right.’—Surely you will give heed to Christ, because every thing that he teaches, is what your own minds and consciences must approve of ;—so you will find, when you come to

learn of him. The more you think of his blessed words, the more you will relish and admire them ;—they will be sweet to your souls ; and you will be convinced, by experience, that it is the true happiness of your nature, to have his words abiding in you, guiding your wishes and directing your pursuits.—Do but lend a willing ear, to hear what your Saviour says to you ;—hear him with an honest heart, and then, I am sure, you will be drawn to obey him, by every motive that can have weight with reasonable creatures.

You will be drawn by the authority of God the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ.—You will be drawn by the approbation of your own reason and consciences ;—you will be drawn by your own interests ;—your greatest, present, and everlasting interests ;—you will be drawn by your present well-being, your safety, comfort, peace, and credit, in this world ;—you will be drawn by love and gratitude, to that kind friend who died for your sakes ;—and you will be drawn by the sure and certain expectation of everlasting life, or eternal damnation, which in your own minds you could not help foreboding, and looking for, but is now brought clearly to light, by the gospel of the Son of God.

Our blessed Lord hath renewed and confirmed, every reason, every call to holiness, which mankind ever had before ; and hath enforced them upon your hearts, in the most powerful and winning manner. He came to glorify the name of God among men ; that is, to convince men of his power, his holiness, and goodness.—He was ever reminding men, that all things are ordered and directed by God ;—that nothing shall happen to us, not even an hair of our heads be lost, but according as he sees fit to permit it ;—that the common blessings and common afflictions of life, are under his providential eye, and that ‘except we repent,’ and make a proper use of this present world, a thousand calamities are hanging over our heads, to chastise us for our benefit, or to destroy us, when his patience is wearied out, and he sees fit to wait no longer for our amendment.

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As to the next world likewise,—your own minds and consciences tell you, that God will reward the righteous, and punish the wicked. But because worldly things, and bad habits, deaden these natural apprehensions of conscience, therefore (our blessed Lord hath remedied this evil,)—Christ's preaching hath restored these apprehensions of reason and conscience, to their full authority. What God had before written in your minds, concerning the world to come, he hath also written the same with pen and ink, and sealed it with the blood of his Son Jesus Christ.—If you have but eyes to see, or ears to hear, you are now, upon God's authority, assured of what your own mind whispered to you before; you know not only in general, that 'it shall be well with the righteous,' and that the wicked shall be punished; but Christ hath plainly told you, how, and in what manner, this shall be done in the end of this world. Christ hath brought life and immortality to light, and hath also made death and damnation, to be without a covering. So that you cannot be ignorant, if you would. You have no excuse for your sins. Whosoever is damned, it is his own notorious fault; he hath the clearest daylight to protect his steps; he knows, he sees his happiness and his danger, so that if he falls into the pit, it is with his eyes open. If you would but have any true thought, you may know, by the life you lead, and by what daily passes in your own minds, what your condition will be in the next world; you may satisfy yourselves whether you belong to God or not; and you cannot but be sensible of your danger, when you are in the way that leads to destruction.

C H A P. XIX.

The judgment of the last day.

FOR now you know, that God will judge the world by his Son Jesus Christ, whom he sent to save it. Christ himself hath told you, that in the last great day,

‘ he will come in the clouds of heaven, and all the holy angels with him, and he will sit upon the throne of his glory,—then the voice of the archangel, which is the trump of God, shall sound, which all that are in their graves shall hear, and shall come forth; the sea also shall give up the dead that are therein, and they shall all stand upon their feet, as an exceeding great army; and they too, who shall be then alive upon the earth, shall be changed, in the twinkling of an eye, into new bodies, and shall come to judgment.—Behold! every eye shall see him! The book of accounts shall be opened, and every one, both great and small, shall be judged, out of the things which are written in the book, according to his works. And he shall separate the righteous from among the wicked, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, setting the righteous on his right hand, and the wicked on his left.—Then he shall pronounce to his good and faithful servants on his right hand, this joyful sentence; come! oh delightful sound! come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the beginning of the world; come, and take possession of that blessed state, for which I made and intended you, and of which you have shewed yourselves worthy.—Our Lord Jesus Christ will then receive them to himself,—that where he is, there may also his servants be,—to behold his glory which his Father hath given him;—and then shall they shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of *their* Father, and *his* Father, with everlasting joy upon all their heads.’

To the wicked he will pronounce, ‘depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.’—For why? Their iniquities have separated between them and their God: so that they can never come to enjoy his blissful presence. They are raised from the grave, as well as the righteous, but alas! theirs is the resurrection of damnation. The wicked are reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath; they shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord.
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They shall be turned into hell, where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched;—there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, and they have no rest day nor night, and the smoke of their torments ascendeth up for ever and ever.

Such are the different ends of the righteous and the wicked, as Christ himself hath laid it before you; and as your own minds incline you to expect. For, now, do but ask your own minds the question; is it not fit and right, that holy souls, who have been always imitating the goodness of God, doing no harm to any, but all the good they were able to all men, and who have been endeavouring to be as like God as they can, in holiness of heart and practice, and who have perhaps undergone many difficulties and hardships, rather than forsake the paths of holiness and goodness. Do not your own minds tell you, that it is fit and right, that they should be lodged safe at last in the arms of the divine mercy and favour? That as they have made a true use of this world, they should pass on to that everlasting state of blessedness, which God hath prepared for such as are worthy of it?

Also, ask yourselves another question; Is not the judgment of God just against them that do evil? Against men that have so sadly contradicted the will of God, and not answered the end for which he made them?—Yes, your reason tells you, that they are unfit to enter into the happiness which was intended for them, and therefore they must be cast into hell, which was not intended for them, but for the devil and his angels only.

So that now, my brethren, you have your natural fears and hopes confirmed, by the Son of God himself. God and your own consciences both agree, in calling upon you to provide for your everlasting safety. And now I will ask you one question more: *Do not you wish to escape damnation, and to be everlastingly happy?* What do you say?—Oh! you need not answer. I am sure you do wish to be happy in heaven. Well, then you will own, that you must take the way to be happy; and

you know that sin will make you miserable. What more need you know, to make you overcome sin?

But perhaps, you may not have well considered, what things are sinful, so as to have a sufficient dread of some vices, which you see often practised.—Your own consciences may tell you, that drunkenness, whoredom, lewd talking, and prophane cursing and swearing, will make you miserable hereafter; but for fear you should not hearken to your consciences in these respects, you shall now see, that Christ hath likewise taught you the same, and hath also shewn you the reason, why they who commit such things, cannot possibly be happy in the world to come.

C H A P. XX.

A drunkard cannot be saved, and the reason why.

SO our Lord Jesus Christ himself hath declared, in plain words, ‘Take heed to yourselves (saith he) lest, at any time, your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and so that day come upon you unawares. For if the servant say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to eat, and drink, and be drunken; his Lord will come, when he is not aware, and will cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with unbelievers; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

St. Paul, in like manner, expressly says, that ‘drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.’—And again, he mentions ‘drunkenness,’ as one of those things, which, whosoever does, shall ‘not inherit the kingdom of God.’

Thus you see, by the express words of the gospel, that one who is a drunkard, cannot go to heaven.—And, my brethren! this is no new thing, which Christ brings to your ears. It is not Christ that brought drunkenness under this dreadful sentence; for ‘he came, not to condemn the world, but to save the world.’ Our blessed Lord laboured, and still labours, to keep you from

from damnation. He mercifully warns you of your danger, that you may avoid it. He did not come to make it *harder for you* to be saved, but *kindly to shew you what you must do* to be saved. He came to teach you, what a blessed place heaven is, and how holy you must be, to fit yourselves for it. Drunkards would have perished everlastingly, though our Lord Jesus Christ had never told us so in his gospel. But he came to tell us so, that we might avoid the danger, which he saw hanging over the heads of drinking men. And to make us mind it the more, he shews the reason why a drunkard cannot have eternal life. Our Lord reminds you of what is certainly very true, 'that whatever is born of the flesh, is flesh;' that is, if you are governed by *fleshly* inclinations, you are *flesh*, and you can last no longer than the flesh lasts: so that when death comes, and puts an end to the flesh, then there's an end of your poor fleshly pleasure, and there is nothing but misery to follow. Whereas, the man that is of a *spiritual* temper and inclination, the man that takes a pleasure in thinking and talking of God, and heaven, and goodness, and that is above indulging his fleshly appetites, he may be said to be *spirit*, and as such, is fit for the spiritual and eternal state of future happiness.—St. Paul also often mentions the same reason. 'The minding of the flesh (saith he) is death; but to be spiritually-minded, is life and peace.'—Again, 'Minding the flesh is enmity against God;'—it is contrary to his pure nature; so that, 'if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if through the spirit, ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live for ever.'

Now, my brethren! if our blessed Lord had only told you, that a drunkard cannot go to heaven, it had been enough, and you ought to have taken it for certain, merely because Christ had told you so; but he hath also shewed you the reason of it, why it *must* be so; that your own minds might be satisfied of it, besides your hearing it from Christ's mouth. For you must own, that any person who is used to drink, is one that *minds the flesh*; because he drinks merely to indulge his sensual appetite;

appetite ;—there lies the man's pleasure, which is directly contrary to that rational or *spiritual* pleasure, which is to last when the flesh is at an end : so that a man must be changed from this way of going on, or else it is plain, you see, that he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Were only a person's health, credit and fortune, to suffer by this vice, it would be the utmost folly to give himself up to it. But that is not the worst of it ; it surely *will*, nay it *must*, end in his everlasting misery and ruin.

And this also shews you, what it is to be a drunkard ; which is a thing of great consequence, in this case. For you may be warned against drunkenness, for ever, and you may be even convinced, that a drunkard cannot be saved, and yet it may have no effect on you, because you are not sensible, when it is that you are so.—This is very often the case. Perhaps you may not consider yourselves as drunkards, because you are not used to get *very drunk* : and because you do not reel and stagger, nor have quite lost all your senses ; or if this should be the case, now and then, perhaps you may chuse to look upon it as a mischance, and so not be much concerned at it ; or you may have a strong head to bear drink, and so fancy that you are not a drunkard, though you are often drinking, whenever you have an opportunity. But now you have seen, that this is all a mistaken notion. For if you love to drink ; if you are often in drinking company ; and if you drink more than is necessary, for the support of your bodily health, you are properly and truly drunkards, because you drink to gratify a corrupt lust, or to indulge that pleasure which you find, in passing away your time among such company.

That you may not then deceive yourselves in this matter, do but ask your own hearts, ‘ what it was that induced you, at any time, to go into an ale-house, or into drinking company, and to drink there more than a draught or two ?’ Why, you must own, that it was for the sake of indulging your fleshly lusts, and this it is, you

you see, that makes you drunkards, and will shut you out of the kingdom of heaven.

I do indeed expect, that some will kick at this way of talking; and, because it condemns the practice of many in the world, some smart thing or other will be said, on the occasion, to raise a laugh, and then you will be satisfied to go on in the old way, because you like it.—But, my brethren! I have shewed you what Christ himself says; you see how agreeable it is to the reason of the thing; and then all I have to say is this: ‘take heed for your own sakes, that you do not deceive yourselves.’—Remember, that your salvation is at stake, therefore consider the matter fairly. Deal honestly with yourselves, and then I make no doubt, but you will see it as I have endeavoured to set it forth, and you will be careful to refrain from those unnecessary, deadly draughts, which poison the soul, and if continued, will assuredly drown it in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone for ever.

C H A P. XXI.

The whoremaster cannot be saved, and the reason why.

OUR blessed Lord reminds you of this reasonable truth, that ‘none can see God, but the pure in heart.’ He likewise says, what you will own to be true, that adultery and fornication spring from an heart, ‘that is unclean and filthy;’ and therefore, that every man must needs put away all such desires and practices from him, let it cost him what pains it will in doing it, or else his whole body will be cast into hell. Agreeably to this, our Lord also says, that ‘whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her,’ that is, whosoever indulges the lustful inclination in his mind, it is the same as committing the crime itself, because the heart is thereby defiled, and he is made unfit to see God in glory. The apostles often say the same thing; ‘whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge.’—‘This we know, that

'no whoremonger nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ.' And again, 'fornicators and adulterers shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' St. Peter also gives the same reason for it as our Lord does; 'I beseech you, brethren, that you abstain from fleshly lusts, because they war against the soul,'—because they wound, they defile, they destroy the soul; they ruin the immortal part of man; the soul must be wretched, it cannot enter into happiness, if it be impure, and given to the desires of the flesh.

Now I will appeal to your own minds, if this be not the case. Yes, you must acknowledge it; it is not only what the gospel declares, but what your reason tells you. And the gospel puts you upon consulting your reason, that you may judge for yourselves. So that now, every time you give way to unclean lusts, you knowingly yield your souls to destruction, for the sake of the present indulgence of your fleshly appetite.—Because it is agreeable to your corrupt taste, you scruple not to commit fornication, or adultery; though it be written in your own breasts, as well as in the word of God, that you thereby forfeit your inheritance in the kingdom of God.

C H A P. XXII.

Filthy talkers likewise, as well as filthy doers, cannot be saved, and the reason why.

OUR Lord himself declares, that 'every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof, at the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' O, come hither then, all ye filthy talkers; if you believe what the Son of God hath declared, why will ye go on thus wantonly to heap up to yourselves wrath, against the day of wrath? for tell me, *what account* will ye be able to give of all your filthy speeches? were they spoken out of duty to God, to promote

mote holiness in yourselves and others? or, were they not spoken by the instigation of the devil, and to do his work?

You may say, that *words are wind*, and so fancy that there is no harm in indecent talking. But our Lord tells you otherwise; he says, that ‘all blasphemies come from the heart, and defile the man.’—And your reason tells you the same thing, if you would but consider; your reason tells you, that a filthy talker must have an impure mind, and is in a damned state, unless he repents, and leaves off this filthy practice. From whence can such discourse come, but from an impure mind, and from indulging filthy thoughts? and therefore the indecent talker shews, by his words, as much as the whoremonger does by his actions, that he cannot enter into the pure mansions of bliss. Accordingly St. Paul reckons *filthy talking* to be one of those practices, which, as well as whoredom, must shut men out from the kingdom of heaven. His words are these; ‘Fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, * let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: † but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.’ Now consider these words altogether, and nothing is more plain, than that St. Paul speaks of, ‘filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting,’ ‡ as part of that ‘uncleanness,’ which whoever practises, ‘hath no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.’ But you have seen indeed, that it must be so, from the reason

* The words *covetousness*, and *covetous person*, in this passage, are with good reason, thought to relate to an *insatiableness of desire after sensual things*, which is more agreeable to the sense of the whole.

† *Which are not convenient*, signifies, *which are very shameful and wicked*, as is evidently the meaning, in Rom. i. 28.

‡ These words may be rendered *filthiness of discourse, foolishness of speech, and lewd turns of expression*, or what is commonly called, *lapping up an impure thought*, in doubtful words,

reason of the thing. For how can men of such polluted lips, join in the songs of angels, or how can they expect to see God, which none but the pure in heart and in tongue can do?

If you are not yet convinced of this, let us take it the other way. If you think it too much to say, that a filthy talker is in a state of damnation; let me ask you this question: is the filthy talker in a state of SALVATION?—See a man sporting with lewd and immodest expressions! can you look upon that man as now approved, and accepted by an holy God? or can he look up to his God, and say, ‘O Lord, I am endeavouring to perfect holiness in thy sight?’ No, no, God is not in his thoughts, nor hath he any true sense of God upon his mind.

I know you will say, *that you mean no harm*, and, that it is only in *sport* that you talk lewdly. This too, is a vain and empty excuse. Why! the *adulterer* will say, that he means no harm; and it is true, he does not mean to commit murder, but he means to *commit adultery*, and you know what is the portion of adulterers. In like manner, a filthy talker *means no other harm* but to indulge his filthiness, and therefore he is filthy.—But it is only in *sport* you say. This proves the wickedness of it. It is wicked sport. *Solomon* says, ‘it is sport to a fool, to do mischief.’ And he describes a madman, as one ‘that casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, and saith, am I not in sport?’—But how comes filthy talking to be your *sport*? because you have a lewd heart. If your heart were not lewd, I am sure lewd discourse would be no *sport* to you. It is a destructive sport, it is an offence, it is a grief to every serious and pure mind to hear it;—it is an offence to the blessed God; it ‘grieves his holy spirit,’ as *St. Paul* says,—it is sport to a swine to wallow in the mire; and why is it so? because he is a swine. And it is sport to a man to talk filthily, but why is it so? because he hath debased his nature; because he hath lost all true sense of the purity of the holy God, with whom he hath to do. It is,

is, because he hath no notion what holiness is; he does not consider, what holy beings the blessed angels and saints are; and is not aware that he himself, is as unfit to come into the presence of God, or to join the society of saints and angels, as the wallowing swine is unfit to be suffered to enter into the king's palace.—Indeed, filthy talking shews a greater degree of wickedness, than filthy actions themselves; because it is not to gratify any of the bodily senses, and therefore is the mere overflowing of an unclean and graceless heart. Whoever is guilty of it, adds audaciousness to his impurity; he glories in his shame, and is one of those desperate profligates, who 'make a mock at sin,' and wantonly sport with their own destruction.

C H A P. XXIII.

The profane swearer cannot be saved and the reason why.

AFTER what hath been said of filthy talking, it will require but few words to shew you, that the profane curser and swearer must needs be in a state of damnation so long as he is subject to that horrid practice.—God Almighty himself hath declared, that 'whoever taketh his name in vain, he will not hold him guiltless,' that is, he will deal by him as a very guilty creature. The reason of it is the same as in filthy talking. Our Lord hath told you that the blasphemy of the tongue arises from the heart. And it is very true. A man could never curse and swear, without something being very much amiss with his heart. If there were any just sense of God's holiness and power in a man's heart, that man would never utter a profane oath, much less would he swear as some do, in almost every breath. Nay more, cursing and swearing shews something worse than merely a want of regard to God; and it looks as if some devilish spirit had the power over men, when they can thus blaspheme God for nothing; when it affords them neither profit nor pleasure; when

when it seems to be merely for the sake of imitating the employment of damned spirits.

C H A P. XXIV.

An exhortation to consider well the four last chapters, lest you should be led away, from regarding them, by the example of others.

AND now my brethren! I do again, and again, most earnestly beseech you to consider well what hath been said in the four last chapters. Here lies the main stress of my book; if it fail of curing you of these four vices, I have lost my labour, and it had been good for you, if you had never been born.—I doubt not but you will be convinced in your own minds whilst you read them or hear them read; but then, what I am afraid of is, lest the example of a wicked world should spoil all again. You see these vices of sensuality and profaneness very commonly practised by rich and poor; this keeps them in countenance, and by this means, though men must needs be sensible of their sinfulness, yet they have not that true dread and abhorrence of them which they should have.—Again, these vices are indeed punishable by the laws of the land; but alas! these laws are seldom put in execution: there is not zeal enough among men now a-days, to discountenance vice as it deserves; so that you may be led to fancy that there is no very great harm in these things; and because others do the same, you may still go on unthinkingly to commit them without fear. But, my dear brethren, do not hazard your salvation upon such deceitful grounds. Take care, to be fully satisfied in your own minds: think for yourselves; judge for yourselves, and may God give you a right judgment in all things.

It is indeed a truly lamentable thing, to see what indifference many men shew in this respect. They seem as if they had no notion of the heinous nature, and dangerous consequence of the fleshly vices. Though their
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own reason, as well as the warning voice of the gospel, must needs make them know better ; yet, somehow or other, they seem to treat it as an allowed thing, that the vile lusts of the flesh must be complied with, let what will be the consequence ; in spite of the gospel ! in spite of reason ! in spite of decency ! — When *St. Paul* was at *Athens*, we read that his spirit was stirred up within him, at seeing the irrational and absurd ceremonies, with which that polite and learned people worshipped their idol gods. This was a strange abuse of common sense in them ; and though they had only their own reason to guide them, they were without excuse for so doing. But how would *St. Paul's* ‘ spirit be stirred in him ! ’ how is every considerate person made uneasy ! how is an holy God daily offended and affronted ! by the wanton levity, with which many christians speak, and seem to take pleasure in speaking, of sensual indulgences ! What is this, but a deplorable *blindness*, which hath seized upon men’s minds ? What is it, but a delusion of the devil ? a *strong* and damnable *delusion*, which the enemy of souls hath successfully brought upon christian professors ; and it may well be considered, as the judicial consequence of men’s having long neglected and abused the knowledge of the truth, and of having given themselves up, to follow their own hearts lusts. But however, my brethren, remember this truth, and let nothing that you see, shake your persuasion of it : ‘ **GOD IS NOT MOCKED**, for whatsoever a man soweth, that he shall reap ; ’ — and though you see men encourage one another in their wickedness, and though they may almost tempt you, to look upon *needless drinking*, and *fornication*, and *filthy talking*, and *profane swearing*, as trifling matters ; yet remember, that it stands recorded in the *book of God*, that they are abominable, and *damning* sins ; nay the same is engraven in the bottom of their own consciences ; and so their awakened reason will, one day or other, oblige them to confess.

C H A P. XXV.

The reasons, why none but these four sins, are treated of in this book.

I Might now go on to shew you further, how, in working out your own salvation, you ought to be growing more and more holy, every day, to the end of your lives. I might shew you, that though you be no drunkards, or adulterers, or robbers, yet that this is not enough to bring you to heaven; but that you must be careful to adorn and beautify your minds, with whatsoever is lovely; that you must be inviting heaven into your souls by devout prayer, by hearing, and reading the holy scriptures, and other good books; by keeping holy the Lord's day, by attending the public worship, and receiving the sacrament regularly; that you must accustom yourselves, to be strictly honest in all your concerns, and learn to be meek, peaceable, forgiving, and charitable.—That you must be encreasing in the fear and love of God; and have it always in your heart, to do all manner of good to all men. I might shew you how excellently these things are taught and enforced by the gospel; that they are the true happiness of your lives, and that they are all necessary to fit you for the happiness of heaven; and that according as you are more holy, more heavenly-minded, and good, you will have more assured hopes of eternal life, and the brighter will your crown of glory be.

But, I shall not speak to you of these things now. Because, I think it better not to go upon too many things at once; and because it would make my book too large.

Neither have I chosen to warn you of any other sins, than these *four*. Because it is chiefly in these, that you do so sadly corrupt yourselves, and will bring yourselves, most certainly, to ruin in the next world, if not to shame and punishment in this. And besides, my brethren, why should I mention to you any other sins, till these

these are conquered. For unless you can be first cured of your fleshly lusts, and loose conversation, it signifies nothing to speak to you about any thing further. If the power of godliness, can, but once, get the better of your fleshly lusts and profligate behaviour, there will then be some hope of you : but oh ! till this is the case, there is *no* hope of you, and you must be without hope yourselves. If the gospel cannot make you chaste and holy, it is all lost upon you, and you are undone for ever. If you are not holy in heart and life, you will be cast into hell, though you should have no other fault. Whatsoever you may fancy yourselves, in other respects, if you fail of *holiness* you must be shut out of the kingdom of heaven ; into which none can enter, but they that are pure in tongue, pure in practice, and ‘ pure in heart.’

For these reasons, I have levelled the main force of my book against the fleshly vices, and loose behaviour of men ; that one point, at least, may be gained. And I am sure, that I have shewed you the strongest reasons in the world, why you should avoid them. You are now fully apprized of the consequence if you do not. You ‘ know the righteous judgment of God, that they who ‘ commit such things are worthy of death.’ And I do now appeal to yourselves, as St. Paul did to the *Corinthians* ; ‘ Know ye not that the unrighteous, that fornicators, adulterers, and drunkards, shall not inherit ‘ the kingdom of God ?’ Know ye not this ? Yes, ye ye do know it. You know that your consciences tell you so ; and you know that God himself hath sent his Son to convince you of the same. Your consciences and the gospel confirm and strengthen each other. The dictates of your consciences make you approve of what the gospel declares, about this matter ; and the gospel establishes the dictates of your consciences. They both agree, in telling you the same thing. In your unthinking humours, you may forget it indeed, or among your vain companions you may make light of it ; but when serious thoughts return (and they will return, at one time or other, whether you will or no) then you cannot, you dare

dare not deny, that these things are so. And now let me ask you, Are you reasonable creatures? What more then can be done for you, than to shew, nay to convince you, as I am sure you are convinced, that, unless you leave off these sins, they will assuredly end in your everlasting ruin.

C H A P. XXVI.

When you are thus truly convinced of the consequence of these sins, you will not dare to trust to a late repentance.

IT is too common for you to deceive yourselves, by thinking that you will leave off your sins, and reform, some time or other, but not now; which would never be the case, if you were truly sensible what the end *must be*, if you should die before. For the true reason why you put off your reformation, is not because you depend upon living long, but because you are but *half convinced* of the damning nature of sin. Did you but see clearly, what the certain consequence of sin is, you would never risk your salvation, upon the uncertainty of life: you would no more venture to delay any longer, than you would forbear to run away from the place where the ground is trembling under you, and just ready to swallow you up.—Be convinced, that *eternal death is the sure consequence of sin*, and you will never so much as *think* of trusting to a late repentance.

C H A P. XXVII.

Men may overcome temptations, if they will.

PERHAPS you will excuse yourselves, by saying that your lusts are so strong, that you cannot get the better of them.—But I pray you, let no such desperate fancy come into your heads. Oh! do not so easily give yourselves up for lost.—If you are tempted to conclude, that your lusts are too strong for you, you should

re-

remember also, that damnation is too horrible for you to think of. For if you content yourselves with saying, by way of excuse, that your lusts are too strong for you; it is the same as saying, that *you know, you are hastening to destruction*: because as surely as your lusts govern you, so surely perdition will be your everlasting portion. — So that, if you do but consider, what you say instead of making such an excuse, for giving way to your sinful appetites, the very thought will alarm you, and put you upon the most resolute endeavours to conquer, and get the better of them.

And you certainly may get the better of your lusts if you will. For suppose you had a cup of the most delicious liquor at your mouths, and were just going to drink it; but a friend holds your hand, and assures you, that there is a deadly poison mixt with it, which will be sure to tear your bowels with the most racking pains, and put an end to your lives in convulsions and agonizing tortures: would you not forbear to swallow down the deadly draught? Could you not help yielding to a moment's gratification of your appetite, when you knew the consequence which would certainly follow? Yes, you could help it—you know you could; and you certainly would dash to the ground with horror, the deadly though delicious bait. The same you may also do, with respect to all impure desires. The sight of a man, the sight of a little child, can make you bridle your lewd intentions; how much more then a due regard of God's all-seeing eye and your own salvation or damnation! So that the very truth is, that there is a great deal of *wilfulness* in your giving way to unlawful desires. You must own, that whenever you have committed an unclean action, it was, because you first encouraged the evil thought in your minds. You kept the foul lust rankling in your breasts, till it got the mastery over you, and then it bit you like a serpent. So St. *James* describes the case. 'You are drawn away, (says he) of your own lust and enticed:' the devil and your corrupt nature, raise the lustful thought in your minds, but you make

it more your own, by ruminating upon it, and by suffering it to dwell there with pleasure; till at length the lust is fully conceived, and then it bringeth forth sin and death. But, you certainly may 'resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' You may make an agreement with your eyes, and not let them wander after tempting objects; you may take the same care of your thoughts also; and by these means, guard against the first rising of the evil desire in your minds: † for you may abandon it when conceived, and dash it from you as you would the poisoned cup, well knowing that death, the eternal death of your souls is at the bottom. *Therefore do not lay the fault on the weakness of your nature, or the strength of the temptation.* This is only the devil's stratagem to make you deceive yourselves. For, when you come to see it fairly, you will be forced to own that it is your *own fault*; and that you deserve to suffer the sad consequence. You must confess, that you willingly yielded to the temptation; nay, you must confess, that you knowingly encouraged the impure desire, and so invited the temptation to you, instead of striving against it; and may truly be said to *chuse* that guilt and misery, which it was in your power to avoid.

C H A P. XXVIII.

The assistance of God's Holy Spirit.

BUT that you may have no pretence for laying the fault on the weakness of your nature, your merciful Creator doeth still more for you yet. He doeth what you could have no notion of, if Christ had not told you of it. For try now, if you can think of any thing else that can be done, to keep you holy, besides what I have already shewn you. God hath given you the

† It will be every day easier and easier for you to do this, if you will but take a little pains with yourselves at first: till at length you will have no difficulty at all, because your inclinations will have taken a quite contrary turn; you will have a *new nature* growing in you, and it will be your greatest pleasure to be 'perfecting' holiness in God's sight.

the strongest reasons against sin, and the greatest encouragements to holiness, that can possibly be conceived. And what more do you think can be done? Would you have God *force* you to live holily? No—That is impossible; it cannot be done. There is no such thing as *forcing* reasonable creatures to be holy against their wills. God Almighty may strike men's tongues dumb, and so far hinder them from filthy talking and profane swearing. God may close up men's throats, and thus hinder them from swallowing down liquor; but this will do them no good: they will be not in the least the better men for this. Your hearts may cherish filthy and blasphemous thoughts, tho' your tongues cannot utter them. You might suffer your hearts to hanker after drink and drunken company, tho' your mouths were sewed up; and you might inwardly indulge, and give up your minds to be preyed upon by impure and adulterous lusts, tho' you were shut up in a dungeon, or banished into an uninhabited island. And then, what the better are you for outward restraint, so long as your souls within you are all foul and corrupt? Outward restraint you see, will never purge the heart; and if the heart be unclean, the whole man is defiled and unfit for heaven.

It must be *reason* therefore, it must be *thought* and *serious consideration*, that will make you holy; and you have enough set before you to make you think, if any thing can make you, but if all will not do, if nothing can prevail with you to take pains with your own hearts, what can be done? what more can be thought of, to save you from ruin?—why, truly nothing can be done that the wit of man could have thought of. But oh! the depth of the wisdom, and goodness of a merciful God!—there is no end of his kindness and care for his creatures. There is indeed no such thing as making us holy, unless we ourselves are *willing*; but God hath found a way to make us *willing*, if we do not obstinately resist him. He assists us with *strength from above*, he exerts his divine power upon our minds, by which we may be made pure and blameless before him.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is gone up into heaven, and now sitteth at the right hand of God. He who was once as a man upon earth, now appears in the presence of God for us; through him we are better able to address our prayers to the divine majesty; and through him we receive the assistance and comfort of the *Holy Ghost*. When he was going to leave this world, he promised to send the Holy Ghost to supply his place, and to abide with us for ever. And he tells us, that as sure as a father is ready to give what is good to his child, so sure it is, nay much surer, that God will give his holy spirit to them that will pray to him for it.

This *holy spirit* is for your support and comfort in all temptations and difficulties, if it be not your own faults. He strengtheneth you in your souls; he enlighteneth the eyes of your minds, that you may have true and heavenly wisdom. He puts good thoughts into you, if you will but take care to keep and encourage them: he at first pricks you to the heart, by letting you see how wicked you are in God's sight; and if you would but cherish this thought in your minds, and not drive it away by drinking and vain company, it would settle upon your hearts and make you new men. The *Holy Ghost* also maketh you to 'abound in hope,' filling you with all joy and peace, by leading you to think of that happiness which is laid up for you in heaven, and to which you will be coming nearer and nearer every day of your lives. In short, the holy spirit helpeth all your weaknesses. He 'worketh in you both to will and to do.' Not forcing you against your wills; but inducing you to be *willing* that you may chuse for yourselves what is right, and that you may obey God from a *ready mind*. O! what thanks and praise are due to God for this unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost which he offers us! Foolish and unthinking men are not sensible of its value. But when once you begin to know yourselves, when once you come to be sensible of your own weakness and misery, and the need you have of better strength than your own to keep you from falling; then you will know how to bless God for giving you the promise of his spirit;

spirit; and it will fill you with courage and comfort, to think that you have such powerful help at hand, to which you may always resort, and upon which you may firmly depend that it will enable you to conquer every sin, and to keep yourselves pure and blameless unto the day of Christ.

C H A P. XXIX.

An earnest exhortation to consider what hath been said.

THUS I have endeavoured to make you sensible of what God hath done for your souls.—Tell me now, my dear fellow creatures, why does the blessed God bestow upon us all this pains? ‘Lord what is man, that thou hast such respect unto him, or the son of man that thou so visitest him!’ It is because our souls are precious in his sight. It is because he would fain save all his creatures from ruin, into which they are so forward to plunge themselves. This is the reason why all is done that can be done for sinful men; and that nothing is left undone which a wise and good God can do, to secure our everlasting happiness. In short, I hope you are now persuaded, that *all is mercy on God’s part*; and it ought to fill your hearts with thankfulness, and your mouths with praise. But then, I do beseech you to consider *what the mercy of God is, and how it shews itself towards you*. God’s great mercy to you is, his taking so much pains to make you holy. This shews how necessary holiness is, and this should make you the more afraid of falling short of it. For if God’s mercies fail of making you holy, they are thrown away upon you, his mercies then do you no good; his mercies cannot save you unless they make you holy in this life. Because, ‘without holiness, no man can see his face in glory.’

And now, my brethren, what more can I say? Shall I entreat you, shall I beseech you to have pity on yourselves? shall I beg of you not to chuse your own destruction? Oh, no! I need not do that. If I have tho-

roughly convinced you, that the sins of sensuality and profaneness most certainly lead to it, then, mere self preservation will make you forsake them, and you will need no other persuasion. A man in his senses, needs no persuasion against leaping into a burning fiery furnace; a man in his senses wants no entreaty to keep him from casting himself down from the top of an house, because he knows that he must be dashed to pieces when he comes to the ground; and *as sure as fire will burn, or a fall from the top of an house crush a man, so sure will an unholý, sensual life end in your everlasting destruction,* whatever may be your fate in this world. If you have well considered what I have set before you in this little book, you can no more doubt of the one than of the other. I have shewed the methods which your merciful God hath taken to convince you of it; they are such as have fully satisfied *my own* mind; and out of this firm persuasion of my own, I have now endeavoured, my dear brethren, to put you upon thinking, nay, to *convince* you, for I am sure you must be convinced what is the certain consequence of unconquered lusts, and a profane heart.—So that, were I to argue with you for ever; were I to exhort you night and day continually, it could only be, by calling upon you to *consider, consider, consider.* For if you will but *consider*, you cannot but *know*; if you know, you must needs *chuse* aright; and then (saith the Lord) ‘though your
 ‘ sins have been as scarlet, they will become white as
 ‘ snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall
 ‘ be as wool.’

C H A P. XXX.

To put men upon considering how wicked they are.

HAVING now so plainly shewn you, that profaneness and sensuality will certainly end in your everlasting ruin; one would think, as you love yourselves, that you would be prevailed on to forsake them. But alas! I have great fear about you still. I know
 how

how apt you are to forget the plainest reasons, when they relate to the salvation of your souls. I know how deaf you can be to the most alarming warnings against sin, though given you by the *Son of God* himself.—I know, how sadly you are governed by your present evil habits; how your vain minds are taken up with what you see, and hear, and taste, and smell; and it grieves me to think, that, after all that can be said to you, some of you will still go on in the old way, till you fall at last, into destruction. My dear brethren, I am often in pain for your behaviour, when you think little of it. If you were but as sensible of your own miserable condition, as I am, you would not wonder, that I am so earnest with you. You would not wonder, that I have said so much to you; and am so loath to give over writing, though I have told you enough, if you would but regard it. But indeed, I stand in fear for you; and that makes me desirous of saying one word after another to you; if peradventure, the next may reach your heart, when all before have failed; and on this account, I could go on for ever, if possible, and never leave off persuading, entreating, and beseeching you, so long as there is any hope of saving your souls from death.

Pardon me then, if, in order to bring home to your hearts, what I have said before, I now endeavour to put you upon considering, how far any of you are subject to these vices, of which you now know the consequence.

First, as to *drinking*. — One cannot look into an alehouse, at any time, but it is great odds, that one sees there some or other, who are muddling away their money, their time, their senses, and their souls. Nay, if one goes into almost any company whatsoever, one finds needless drinking going on. It makes a part of the employment of most meetings; in some, it is the chief business. So much does this destructive vice prevail in this sinful nation, that it is come to be looked upon, as the inseparable attendant on all social friendship. Many seem to have no notion of enjoying one another's company, without drinking. No bargain is made, no business carried on; men do scarcely

meet together on any occasion without more or less of this unnecessary indulgence of their senses. By this means, the tippling habit is so kept up in some men, and so grows upon them in time, that not a day passes, without swallowing down at least, three times the quantity that nature requires, for the preservation of health, and the true enjoyment of life.

Now, my brethren, ask yourselves, whether or not, this be your way of going on.—Perhaps, you may not have thought about it before: so that you have never suspected, how much unnecessary drinking you have hitherto been guilty of. But, if you find this to be the case; consider well, what you have already read in the XXth chapter; and, I think, you will be convinced, that it brings you under the guilt of drunkenness. For, besides wasting God's good creatures, whilst your families perhaps are pinched with want, is it not a constant habit of pleasing the flesh? does not the love of drink, by this means, grow upon you? does it not deaden the powers of your soul? in short, do not you see, how contrary it is to that cool, holy, and heavenly frame of mind, which alone will fit you for everlasting blessedness. Consider this well, and I am sure, you will be more cautious about drinking than you have hitherto been.

But alas! I have, still, a more dismal picture of the drunkenness of men, to set before you.

When any great man wants to gain the good will of the multitude, what is the method that he takes to do it? Does he consider how he may bestow upon them some real kindness? Does he contrive, how he may do them the greatest service, that can be done for them? Does he think of employing his wealth, or his example, in setting on foot some scheme, for making them more sober, chaste, and virtuous in their behaviour? No such thing! he knows too well, that bestowing such real benefits as these, is not the method to make himself popular, but rather, to be disliked and forsaken by the multitude. This plainly shews which way it is, that men's inclinations lead them; this proves, that, what

what the apostle said of the heathens, is still too true, of the present race of christians, that 'the friendship of the world is enmity against God;' and that the sure way to please the generality of men, is to tempt their senses, and promote their vices; which is directly contrary to the voice of reason, and to the will of God. —And accordingly, the man that aims at popularity, after the wisdom of this world, applies the apostle's maxim the backward way: he encourages those very practices which God abhors, in order to gain the friendship of men. He gratifies the vanity of their minds with such devices, as tend to enflame the passions, by stirring up in them the madness of mirth; and by supplying them with liquor, sets open the flood-gates of wickedness, which overwhelm those, whom he may be thought to oblige. For what is the consequence? The ill judged bounty, instead of being a blessing, becomes a blasting curse to those who partake of it; and *shameful spewing* is the end of such empty glory. For so unbridled do men's lusts shew themselves on these occasions, that they soon drench themselves into madness, and then all becomes riot and disorder in an instant! —As if a legion of evil spirits had been let loose among them, they begin to curse, and damn, and shout, and rave; and every kind of unseemly behaviour prevails; —till at length from being frantick, they sink into stupidity; they reel away into corners, to sleep off the fumes of the liquor, or else, they lie wallowing in the mire, like the filthy swine, from whom they differ in nothing, but in shape, and guiltiness.

I should have wished to draw a covering over this melancholy scene, which is such a sad disgrace to my fellow creatures; but I could not pass it over, out of faithfulness to your souls; indeed, it is no more than what every one knows to be true; and I mention it, that you may see it in its true light, and do the like no more. For I appeal to any of you, whether this be not the case, as oft as ever there is liquor enough to be had? If it were to happen every day in the week, it is certain, that the same use would be every day made

made of it. This too plainly shews, what multitudes there are, whose hearts are at all times, ready to run into drunkenness. Whether any one of *you*, who read these lines, are of this sort, your own consciences will tell you; and I hope, will smite you too with a becoming shame and fear on the occasion; as, enough hath been already said to satisfy you, that men of such a turn as this cannot be saved.

And then, as to *whoredom*—Though it be more concealed than drunkenness; yet there are too many sad tokens of it, which cannot be hidden. The number of abandoned profligate women that infest our streets; and the many wretched objects of disease of both sexes, whose necessities force them to discover their shame, in applying for assistance at the publick hospitals, are too plain proofs what scenes of filthiness are continually acted, under the pure eye of *him*, to whom ‘darkness and light are both alike.’

Moreover, the rude, profligate discourse which is so common in men’s mouths; the unconcerned manner in which they curse and swear, when they are under no restraint, from any body’s being near; the filthy, vulgar expressions, which one cannot help hearing in every place; these are such sure proofs of the lamentably corrupt state of men’s minds, as must grieve the heart of every thinking person, who hath a due sense of their misery and danger. ‘Oh that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears; that I might weep, day and night, for these my unthinking fellow creatures, who are so without understanding, which have eyes, and see not, which have ears, and hear not.’ Alas! what hope can there be of such men’s salvation? Can such as these be the favourite sons of God, and heirs of eternal life? Oh no! it cannot be. Reason and the gospel forbid us to hope it.—Persons so polluted, are not fit for the happiness of God’s kingdom; they have no mark of heaven about them; the principle of eternal life is not in them; the scripture speaks of them, as being ‘dead in trespasses and sins;’ and reason, as well as scripture, tell us, that death everlasting must be the

the end of their present miserable life. And *good God!* when one considers how many such persons one meets with every day; it makes one's heart bleed, to think of that misery, which they are treasuring up to themselves; and yet, like the silly ox, that is fattening for the slaughter, they themselves seem to have no thought of what is coming upon them. O who can be unmoved at seeing such multitudes of our fellow creatures, in this situation? to see such 'destruction and misery in their ways,' to think that the pit is opening her mouth to swallow them up—every day, some or other of them! Who, I say, can think of this, and not run to their assistance, to 'pluck them as firebrands out of the burning?'

Be not then angry at me for dealing with you so plainly. Believe me, I do it, not to shame you, but as dear brethren, to warn you—that you may learn to see your case in the same light that I do; that is, as God's word teaches you to see it; and as the Almighty himself looks upon it; and must look upon it, whilst you go on in this manner. I speak these things out of the truest love to your souls; that you may be aware of the extreme danger you are in; and then, I am sure it will give such a shock to your minds as you never felt before: then like men, awakened out of a deep sleep at midnight by some dreadful calamity you will instantly begin to cry aloud to God for mercy; you will come humbly prostrate before the throne of grace, begging for the help of the Holy Spirit to enable you to conquer your own hearts, and to get the better of those vain inclinations and sinful habits, which hold you so fast in a state of death and damnation.—For, whenever you begin to think of amending, you will at first find it hard to resist the inclinations of your corrupted nature; but a truly awakened sense of your condition, assisted by the Holy Spirit of grace, will be ever pushing you on, till you come to be steadfast in the ways of holiness; and then, you will find your minds at peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C H A P. XXXI.

An earnest call to parents.

ON this occasion, I cannot forbear directing my discourse to all parents.—They can prevent, if they please, much of the difficulty we find in making men better. If parents would but take such care of their children as they ought to do, we should not have so many rude profligate creatures among us as we have; and even such as do turn out wild, would surely never be so stupidly deaf to good advice as they are, if any right care had been taken of them when young. Indeed, many children are very greatly to be pitied in this respect. Some have no care at all taken of them, and then no wonder that they grow up in wickedness, when they hear and see nothing else. It is true, many parents are very desirous of having their children taught at school, and will make hard shift, out of their small comings-in to pay for it; for this they are justly to be commended; but there is a thing of far greater consequence, which is too much neglected; and that is, their bestowing proper pains upon their children at home.—Their learning to read and the good things they are taught at school, or their saying their catechism at church, will all be of little use to make them good, if they are suffered at other times, to mix with wicked and idle companions from whom they will be sure to learn their evil words and manners. To prevent this, parents should be very watchful over them at all times; carefully keeping them from rude and wicked companions; talking to them often about God and goodness; praying with them, and for them, and teaching them to pray for themselves; and seeing that they pay a due regard to the Lord's day, in all the duties of religion, both public and private, and by a serious devout behaviour from morning to night. This is the way to preserve your dear children from the wickedness that is in the world.—I know, that many of you will say that you have not time for this; and it is true, that working men have not so much time as they might

might wish. But however, take care that your consciences can answer for you, that you have done the best you can for your children's salvation; and if you are sensible that you want time for it on the week days, you should be the more careful in doing it on the Sunday. Though you cannot read, let that be no excuse for you. You know enough to be able to give them good advice, and to keep them out of wickedness; and you may talk to them upon religion to a very good purpose, if you do but give your mind to it; and by this means you will be growing in goodness yourselves, while you are doing your duty to your children.

But alas! how different is this from what many parents do!—Instead of taking your children to church regularly, and instead of spending the Lord's day among your families, in a sober, serious, and devout manner, you not only suffer your children to run about, as if no regard were due to this holy day; but what is still worse, you often set them a sad example in your own behaviour: you pass your Sundays either in lurking stupidly at home, or in wandering about, and perhaps even in the alehouse, without any regard to the end for which God appointed the sabbath; and though you may go to church sometimes, yet you are so irregular and so inconstant in it, that you seem to look upon it as a thing of no great consequence. Thus your children lose that reverence and respect for God and religion, which you should be careful by every means to imprint upon their minds; and then no wonder that what they are taught at school, or at church, does them little good, because they learn from you to be in no great concern about putting it in practice.

This is one great reason, that makes the world so wicked as it is.—Children are taught to know that there is a God, but there is little care taken to make them behave accordingly; and their being suffered to grow up in this manner, makes it so hard to prevail on them to alter their way of going on, when they come to riper years.

O parents! parents! little do many of you think, how cruelly you wrong your poor children by such neglect as this. Better had it been for you and them, that ye had
never

never been born, than that ye should thus suffer them to be led captive by the devil at his will. If *you* neglect them, who can take care of them?—their souls call upon you as loudly for assistance, as their bodies do for bread to eat. If you will suffer them to be exposed, they will fall, an almost certain prey to the roaring lion, who is daily seeking to devour them.—Little do you consider, parents! what sorrows you are treasuring up for yourselves, as well as for your children, if you should live to see them ruined and undone, by those vices and follies, which your own example hath taught them, or into which your careless neglect hath suffered them to fall. Bitter sorrows they must undoubtedly be, when you come to consider, that you have your children's sins, as well as your own, upon your guilty heads; and what your consciences will make you dread from the Almighty this awful rebuke: 'Because thou hast neglected to do thy best, in preserving thy child from sin in his youth; thou hast destroyed *his* soul, he is unfit for my heavenly kingdom, and he must die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at *thy* hands,' thou cruel parent.

O terrible words of most just judgment! how dreadful must they sound in the ears of him who knows that he hath not done his best for his children's salvation! how must the piercing thought torment him, and bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave; when he sees his wicked child brought, perhaps, to shame and misery in this world, most certainly in the road to damnation, in the next, through his own fault, when it is then too late for him to amend it.

C H A P. XXXII.

An address to young persons, who are, as yet, free from the fleshly vices and filthy conversation of the wicked.

MY dear young friends, if through the grace of God and your parents' care, you have been hitherto preserved from the corruptions of the world; let me

me rejoice with you and encourage you to persevere, in the paths of innocence. Go on then, giving God the glory, relying on his protection, and assured of his favor. Go on, I say, free from those miseries, which are the certain attendants on vice, happy in yourselves, happy in the love and esteem of all good men; happy in the fair prospect of earthly prosperity and success, so far as God sees it best for you; and rejoicing in the sure and certain hope of eternal life.

But that your hope of happiness may be well founded; let me beg of you to consider, whether your present goodness be of the right sort, or not.—You may be sober and honest; you may be careful and diligent in your business; you may be kind and civil to your friends, and to all men. In these good qualities you may excel many others, and be justly esteemed and honoured before them: the world will speak well of you, and you will be looked upon to be hopeful and promising youths, as you certainly are. But I must remind you of what our blessed Lord said to a very hopeful young man, like yourselves. Our Lord ‘loved him’ for the goodness he shewed; but told him, that there was one thing wanting in him still: that *he was not RELIGIOUS enough*; that he must become *his* follower, that he may bring him to the true knowledge of divine and heavenly things.

Now this, I fear, is the case with too many young persons in the world, and old ones too, who in other respects are justly to be esteemed.—Consider then, my dear friends—Doth the present regularity of your lives arise from a due sense of God upon your minds? Are you sober, and diligent, and honest, with a view to please HIM? Or rather, is it not chiefly owing to worldly prudence in you? or, it may be, you are of a pliable temper, and the restraint of your parents or masters, hath, as yet, happily kept you from wickedness?—Consider, I say, fairly; and if this be your case, then I must tell you, as *our Lord* did the young man, that ‘You want one very material thing.’ You want to apply yourselves more earnestly to *religion*: You must become sincere followers of Jesus Christ: You must take care to furnish

furnish and enrich your minds with the knowledge of those divine and heavenly truths, which he came to teach you: You must be careful to keep the love of God, at all times alive in your hearts, by being constant in prayer and all other religious duties at church, in the family, and in your closets.—This is the only true ground, and sure safeguard of your innocence and virtue. If you neglect religion, you will never be in reality virtuous at best; because you will not have *the love of God* in you, without which, mere sobriety and carefulness will avail you nothing in his sight. And moreover you will be in continual danger of falling into sinful courses. ‘Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall,’ saith the Apostle, and nothing is able to make you stand, but the power of religion carefully kept alive in your hearts. For, what is the reason, why men are so ready to run into sinful practices, as they are? What makes them be always seeking to please their vain and corrupt inclinations? It is because their minds are empty; because they have not the knowledge of God and Christ *abiding* in them; so that, for want of having that which is good, to think of, they are forced to have recourse to what is unprofitable, vain, and wicked. But, my dear friends, I have now told you of this danger, and also shewn you wherein your defence and safety must consist. I have shewn you the true ‘armour of God, which will secure you against all the fiery darts of the wicked.’ Oh, let me persuade you then to put it on; that you may be truly such as God would have you to be, and your hopeful beginning, be perfected in glory everlasting. If I can prevail with you to make *religious knowledge* your study, and *religious exercises* your regular practice, I need not use any arguments, to keep you from the corruptions of the world. For this religious ‘wisdom, my son, is the principal thing; exalt her, and she shall preserve thee; she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; she shall encompass thee with a crown of glory.’ By her assistance thou shalt walk in thy way safely; and thy

‘ thy foot shall not stumble. Because the Lord shall be
 ‘ thy confidence, and shall keep thy feet from being
 ‘ taken. To keep thee from the strange woman, from
 ‘ the stranger, who flattereth with her words. Who for-
 ‘ saketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the co-
 ‘ venant of her God; whose house is the way to hell,
 ‘ going down to the chambers of death.’

But depend upon it, my young friends, that unless you
 are *religiously disposed*, all your present hopefulness will be
 as ‘ the morning dew, that passeth away.’—You will ne-
 ver be able to withstand the temptations of the world,
 the flesh, and the devil, you will not be truly innocent,
 and happy, in this world, or in the world to come.

C H A P. XXXIII.

*A concluding address to those, who are, at present, subject
 to fleshly lusts.*

AND now, my dear brethren, though my whole
 book is written for your sakes, and directed to you,
 and though I cannot offer more convincing reasons, why
 you should forsake your evil courses than I have already
 done; yet I am still loth to take my leave of you, with-
 out once more striving to fix upon your minds what I
 have been saying.

There is nothing in this book, but what is clear and
 certain; nothing but what your own reason and consci-
 ences must consent to. This I know, because God hath
 framed *your* minds, in the same manner as he hath *mine*.
 My mind plainly tells me, that fleshly vices, and pro-
 phane, filthy conversation, must end in misery at last;
 your own minds I am sure, tell you the same thing; and
 so does *every* man’s mind, who considers the matter; es-
 pecially since God hath expressly confirmed it by our
 Lord Jesus Christ.—It is, therefore, *a real, certain truth*,
 which can never be contradicted; and, as such I will
 here set it down, in large writing, and I wish I could
 print it more strongly, upon the living tables of your
 hearts.—That

Im-

Immoderate and needless drinking, whoredom, filthy talking, cursing and swearing, will assuredly end in the everlasting damnation of those, who allow themselves in them.

This is what you, and I, and all men, are agreed about.—It is a **THING CERTAIN**.—As *certain*, as if we saw it with our eyes. Let any one try and deny it, if he can.—And then what reason can there be, why you should not instantly forsake that, which you *know* will bring upon you everlasting ruin?—You *know* that water will drown, and fire burn, and therefore you dread them, and beware of them; You *know* that arsenic will poison, and therefore you are cautious how you meddle with it. You *know*, that the viper will sting you to death, and therefore you flee from it, and kill it. Why then do you not flee from sin, which, you *know*, will assuredly destroy you, as water will drown, or fire burn, or arsenic poison, or the viper bite?

But sin is pleasant to your taste.—Yes, that shews you the danger you are in.—Your taste is corrupted; the poison of sin is already at work in you, and perhaps you will not be at the pains to purge it out, though you must know, that it is all the while eating like a canker, and will consume you at last. Now what is this, but *choosing* to be damned, rather than forsake the corrupt pleasures of the flesh?—Come, let us reason together plainly on this great point.—When you get up in a morning, sober and cool, you can then say to yourself: ‘If I fall into needless drinking this day; if I go after
‘lewd women, to-day; if I suffer myself to indulge
‘impure thoughts, and to join in filthy and prophane
‘talk, this day; I know that I shall do wickedly, and
‘make myself liable to everlasting destruction.’ This, I say, you may think of, when you are cool and sober, in a morning; and it is your own fault, if you do not keep the same thoughts upon your minds all day long, especially, if you will pray to God for the grace of his Holy Spirit:—so that, when you come near an alehouse,

or

or when you meet with a drinking companion, or with a lewd abandoned prostitute, if you are ensnared by them, it is with your eyes open; you are in your cool and sober senses, you know the consequence, and you designedly yield yourselves up to misery and death.

But you may think that the next world is at a great distance; perhaps not so; for ought you can tell, it may be very near, and even at the door. As our Lord says, 'this night thy soul may be required of thee.' And if it should *not* be so near, that does not make it less *sure* and *certain*. You see in this world, that sin and misery go hand in hand together. Drunkenness is attended by a bad habit of body, a wasted fortune and distressed circumstances. Whoredom is almost sure to be followed by disease; and criminal offences, by shame and punishment. Thus, you see, it is ordered by the wise providence of God, in this present life, and this ought to remind you, of what will be the case in the everlasting world. Sin and misery, my brethren! are so joined together, as never to be separated, neither here nor hereafter. And yet, plain as this is, *some will take no warning*. Though they have, before their eyes, continual proofs that criminal offenders are sure to be punished, one time or other; though, for the most part, they are found out in their *first* offence, and never do escape, for a long time together;—yet so blind will men be, as, even against all hope, to venture upon the desperate hazard. Now if this be the case, as to what you see with your eyes, no wonder that it is so hard to make you affected, with *things unseen*. This shews you, *what a sad thing it is, to be under the power of sensual lusts*. For, though our blessed Lord is 'come from the dead,' to persuade you as to *things eternal*; and though the daily instances of men brought to shame and punishment in this life are, one would think, sufficient warnings for all, to beware of their unhappy fate; though you hear the *horrid clank* of the galling fetters which poor unhappy criminals are obliged to drag about; though you know of the dark and dismal dungeons, in which they are locked down; the tedious nights and days of disgraceful confinement,

which

which they must endure, and at the same time have a secret dread even of such confinement being at an end, when they are to be brought out for spectacles to the world; I say, though these things are every day happening before your eyes, and the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners, with which they lament the loss of liberty, and dear reputation, call upon you, louder than words can express, to beware of 'coming into the same dismal place of torment,' to which their *vices* have brought them; yet you see that neither the certainty of *eternal ruin* hereafter, nor of present disgrace and suffering here, are sufficient warnings to men, so long as they yield themselves up to be the servants of sin.—But, my brethren! rouse yourselves from this wretched slavery, and burst the chains which hold you in such a miserable and dangerous bondage; call to mind how safe and happy you may be, if you will; remember, and 'shew yourselves men.' *Resolve, resolve, resolve* to be free; for if ye become the servants of Christ, if you put yourselves under his conduct, 'ye shall be free indeed,' free from sin, and free from fear. *Resolve*, I say, and cry mightily in prayer to God for the help of his spirit; and never leave off *praying* and *striving* till you have conquered your evil habits, till you have saved yourselves from the ways of a wicked world; then you will enjoy the glorious liberty of Christians, and be blessed with peace and joy unspeakable; 'for God will then take up his abode with you, and dwell with you, and you shall be his people, and he will be your God;' and you will at length arrive at that world, where 'there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.'

And 'may he, who alone is able to do it, thus bless this poor attempt of mine to your souls; that 'the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, you may begin to follow, in this your day, the things that belong to your present and everlasting peace and happiness, before they be hid for ever from your eyes!' Amen.

St. Paul saith of himself, that he had been the chief of sinners; but when he was stopt in his sinful course, and had thoughts of becoming a follower of Jesus Christ, then it was that he began to pray. (See Acts ix. 11.) And if this book does you any good, it will be sure to put you upon lifting up your hearts to God, with greater earnestness than you have ever yet done.—Till you can furnish yourselves therefore with a larger set of devotions, I have here provided you with,

A SHORT OFFICE

FOR THE

PENITENT, RETURNING SINNER;

Chiefly taken from the Book of COMMON PRAYER.

TO the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws which he hath set before us. Dan. ix. 9, 10.

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Luke xv. 18.

THE scripture, in many places, inviteth us to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God, our heavenly Father, but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. I must therefore examine my life and conversation by the rule of God's commandments, and wherein soever I perceive myself to have offended, either by will, word, or deed, there I must bewail my own sinfulness, and confess myself to Al-

mighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life. And if I perceive my offences to be such as are not only against God, but also against my neighbours, then I must reconcile myself unto them, being ready to make them satisfaction, according to the uttermost of my power, for all injuries and wrongs done by me to any other; and being likewise ready to forgive others who have offended me, as I would have forgiveness of my offences at God's hand. Thus I must judge myself, that I be not judged of the Lord. I must have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ my Saviour; and I must return to him who is the merciful receiver of all true penitent sinners; assuring myself that he is ready to receive me, and most willing to pardon me, if I come unto him with faithful repentance; if I submit myself unto him, and from henceforth walk in his holy ways; if I take his easy yoke and light burden upon me, following him in lowliness, patience, and charity, being guided by the grace of his holy spirit, seeking always his glory, and serving him duly in my calling

calling with thanksgiving. This if I do, Christ will deliver me from the curse which shall light upon them that shall be set on his left hand; and he will set me on his right hand, and give me the gracious blessing of his Father, commanding me to take possession of his glorious kingdom; unto which may he vouchsafe to bring me, of his infinite mercy. Amen.

Here pause a while, in order to recollect yourself; and then go on, saying.

O Lord God, holy and just, it grieves me that I have offended thee, by loving and delighting in other things more than in thee, to whom all love, duty, and obedience are due.

It grieves me, that I have offended thee, by taking thy holy name in vain; by swearing by it rashly; or by mentioning it without reverence upon trifling occasions.

It grieves me, that I have so often offended thee, O God, by neglecting to attend thy public worship, and by misusing thy holy sabbaths.

It grieves me, that I have ever offended thee, by being uncutiful to my parents; that I have not been duly submissive towards my betters; that I have behaved proudly and disdainfully towards my equals and inferiors.

It grieves me, that I have so often offended, by excessive anger, revenge, or cruelty. — I lament, O Lord God, for all the encouragement which I have given to other men's sins; either by joining with them therein, or by neglecting to reprove them for them. — For all the provocation, which I have ever given others; for all the sinful passions which I have ever shewn, the reproachful speeches which I have used; or the ill-will I have borne towards those, who have at any time provoked me. — For all the jealousies which I have entertained; or the evil surmises I have uttered.

It grieves me, O most holy God, that I have offended thee so often, by impure thoughts, or words, or actions,

—or by intemperance in eating or drinking.

It grieves me, that I have offended thee, O righteous God, by picking and stealing; by defrauding others; or by being unfaithful in serving those who have employed me.

It grieves me, that I have offended, by lying and slandering, tale-bearing and flattery; or by covetousness; envy at the good success of others, or by being discontent with my own condition.

Then kneel down, and say,

A Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men. I acknowledge and bewail my manifold sins and wickednesses, which I from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word and deed, against thy divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against me. I do earnestly repent, and am heartily sorry for these my misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto me; the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, most merciful Father; for thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive me all that is past; and grant that I may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honour and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

P S A L M LI.

HAVE mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness, according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness; and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my faults; and my sin is ever before me.

But lo, thou requirest truth in the inward parts, and shalt make me understand wisdom secretly.

Turn thy face from my sins, and put out all my misdoings.

Make

Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

O give me the comfort of thy help again; and stablish me with thy free spirit.

Then shall I teach thy ways unto the righteous, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of my health, and thy tongue shall sing of thy righteousness.

Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall shew thy praise.

For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee; but thou delightest not in burnt offerings.

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Lord have mercy upon me.

Christ have mercy upon me.

Lord have mercy upon me.

OUR Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven: give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

O Lord, save me thy servant,

Who put my trust in thee.

Send me help from above.

And evermore mightily defend me.

Help me, O God, my Saviour,

And for the glory of thy name deliver me; and be merciful to me a sinner, for thy name's sake.

O Lord, hear my prayer,

And let my cry come unto thee.

O Most mighty God and merciful Father, who hast compassion upon all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but that he should rather turn from his sin and be saved; mercifully forgive me my trespasses; receive and comfort me, who am grieved and wearied with the burden of my sins. Thy property is always to have mercy; to thee only it appertaineth to forgive sins. Spare me, therefore, good Lord, spare me, whom thou hast redeemed; enter not into judgment with thy servant, who am vile earth, and a miserable sinner; but so turn thine anger from me, who meekly acknowledge my vileness, and truly repent me of my faults; and so make haste to help me in this world, that I may ever live with thee in the world to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TURN thou me, O good Lord, and so shall I be turned. Turn, O Lord, the whole stream of my affections, from the love of wickedness and vanity, to the pure love of thee; and make me so to love the things which thou commandest, and to desire that which thou dost promise, that among all the temptations and troubles of the world, my heart may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer for Chastity.

GREAT and glorious Lord God! thou art a being of infinite holiness, and unspotted purity, and hast declared thy hatred and abhorrence of all impurity and uncleanness. I present myself before thee at this time, beseeching thee to give me a heart full of sorrow and concern, that I am so far from that purity and holiness, which thou requirest, and which is necessary to make me meet to partake of the joys and delights of thy kingdom.

'I come,

‘ I come, beseeching thee to pardon all the impure thoughts, desires, and purposes which I have ever entertained in my mind, and all the immodest and unchaste behaviour and actions of my life. And, O merciful God, I implore pardon and forgiveness for all who have tempted me, or have been tempted by me, or who have been partakers with me, in any kind of impurity. Rescue them from the power of their lusts, and grant that they may become holy in thy sight.’

O be thou pleased to purge and cleanse me from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that my body may be a holy temple, fit for thy holy spirit to dwell in.

Make me always to remember, that thou art every where present, and that all things, how secret soever they be kept from men, are naked and open to thy all-seeing eye. Let me ever remember what thy holy word declares, that whore-mongers and adulterers shall be judged and condemned by thee, and that no unclean person shall enter into thy kingdom, and that for the sake of these things, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.

I know, O Lord, that purity is thy gift; but I know likewise that thou wilt not bestow it on such as be slothful and negligent, in using the means which thou hast appointed for the attainment of it. Make me then diligent and industrious in the place and station, wherein thy providence hath

set me, considering that idleness is the occasion of impurity. Teach me to keep a strict guard over my senses, to refrain from all evil and corrupt communications; and grant that my speech may be such, as may do good to those with whom I converse. Teach me to be grave in my dress, moderate in my diet, temperate in the use of all things, prudent in the choice of my company, and careful to keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.

Give me wisdom to abstain from seeing all such sights, and from reading all such books, as are apt to excite in me impure desires, or lightness of spirit; to be constant and diligent in reading and meditating on the holy scriptures, which are able to cleanse the heart, and to excite in it pious affections.

Grant that my soul and body may be preserved pure and undefiled; that glorifying thee in my body, and in my spirit now, I may hereafter be glorified by thee.

Give me a firm faith in thy power, for the subduing all impurity, and whatever is contrary to thy blessed will in my soul. Let no discouragements keep me from presenting frequent and fervent petitions to thee, for this excellent and necessary gift of chastity, in the name of our great Mediator, Jesus Christ, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, thanksgiving and praise, now and for ever. Amen.



THE END.